

# Educational Supplement

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Gerald Haigh abandons his deckchair to seek out Bournemouth's educational entrepreneurs.

## Off-beat style breaks bounds

David Hellewell, enthusiastic composer, and inveterate talker is the founder of what, for want of a better name, he continues to call "Mister D Music".

Hellewell caused a couple of ripples, reported in *The TES* back in January, when he made some outspoken criticisms of conventional music teaching. "Traditional music teaching puts children off," he said then. What Hellewell does, in essence, is write graded keyboard music which combines classical, rock, pop and jazz styles. He publishes this music and also teaches it to young players in his "Mister D Music Academy".

Although he believes firmly in the piano as the essential basis of all keyboard work, he makes much use of electronic instruments, and I watched a happy ensemble workshop for young players using conventional instruments and also electronic keyboards and synthesizers. Without doubt young players enjoy "Mister D Music" for, as more and more teachers are belatedly realizing, the barriers between styles are largely artificial, largely erected by adults, and have as much to do with social convention as they do with musical judgment.

An important key to Hellewell's success lies in his own formidable musicianship, which alone is enough to belie his apparent disdain for the classics. In fact he aims to teach a love for all kinds of music.



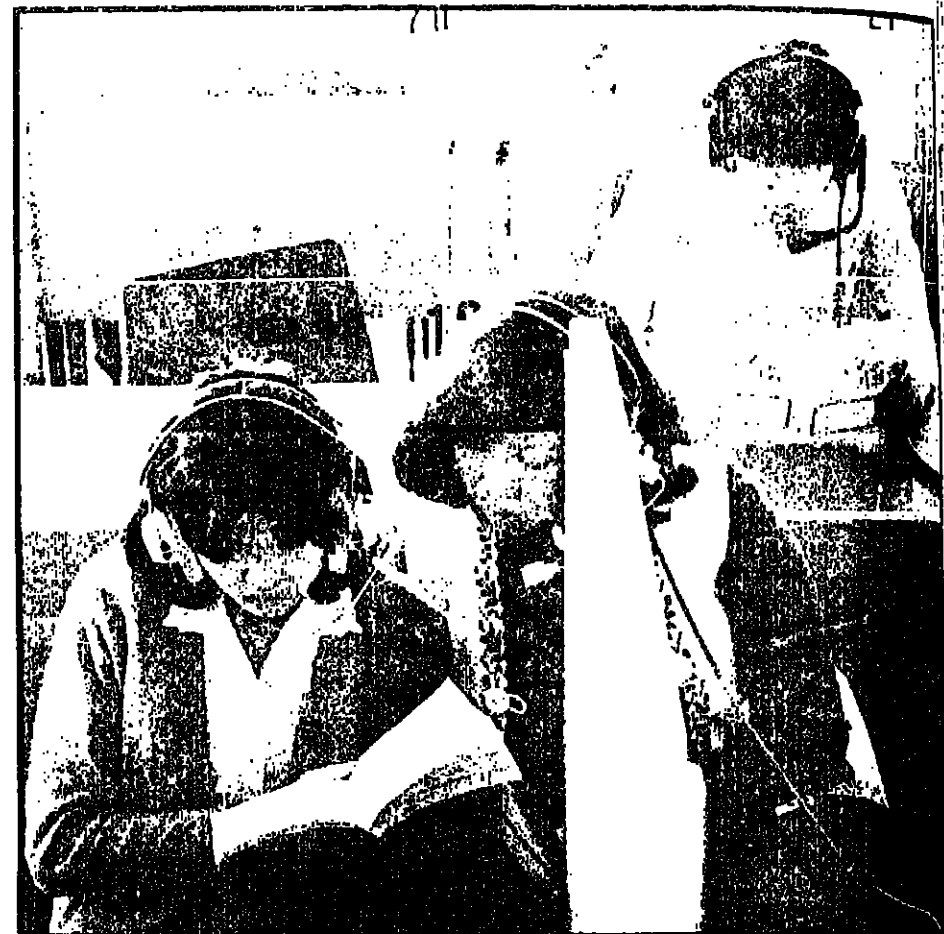
Mister D Music: a novel combination of classical, jazz and pop

Starting out as a jazz pianist, he then moved on to a career as a leading avant garde composer with numerous large scale works and performances to his credit. It was this latter experience which taught him that contrary to the gospel as often preached by jazz and rock performers, any kind of music can be exactly notated and reproduced. Thus if you persevere with one of his jazz pieces and learn it, then to and behold, it comes out sounding like jazz, unlike so much sheet music which sounds nothing like the genuine article.

Most impressive testimony to Hellewell's music and method is the work of his pupil Maia Elliott who last year, at 14, won the Best Young Pop Pianist Competition run by the Piano Manufacturers Association and the BBC. A recently produced record by Maia displays the breadth of her skill right across the musical spectrum. Hellewell's music is attractive to listen to and interesting to play and will surely make steady inroads into the teaching repertoire.



Bournemouth: a Mecca for EFL students from all over the world



## When B & B means books and board

I always used to feel that Bournemouth should have in its parks instead of Crazy Golf, a more appropriate game called Sensible Golf where heads on holiday could hit balls along predictable and unsurprising paths while exchanging reserved pleasantries with attendants in pinstripe suits.

Now, however, the Government itself has enlivened the summer with its own manicured pronouncement about corporal punishment, and heads are thereby relieved for all time of the requirement to be sensible. This autumn, therefore, I propose to carry out my long standing threat to take assembly with my trousers rolled up to the knees in order to see if anyone notices.

Mind you, pupil perception of what constitutes absurdity can be refreshingly acute. On the last day of term I took an academic gown to be photographed with a colleague who had just been to his degree ceremony, only to find myself being followed about by gleefully pointing children. Did it happen to Dr Arnold? I asked myself.

I have watched Bournemouth, over a period of almost 30 years, gradually being taken over by the under-twenties. The grass in the gardens which used to be only for looking at is now covered with gaggles of happy youngsters with stereophonic blasters. An important ingredient in this change has been the growth of the English language school industry along the South Coast. The Bournemouth area alone draws tens of thousands of students from all over the world each year.

The story of the language schools is that of all private enterprise - lean years and fat years, periodic raids by avaricious cowboys, the growth of professional bodies and a continuing

theme of various kinds of tentative government intervention. The one I visited, the Hinton School of English, in the centre of Bournemouth, has about 400 students at any one time in the summer, the numbers falling in the winter to about a quarter of this. The first thing that struck me about it was that although a school, it is very firmly a business concern with, for example, a reception area and a well-staffed office which presents an efficient and tidy face to the customer. Perhaps I should not have been surprised, therefore, to discover that the director of the school, Rodney Taylor, is not a teacher but a businessman - a quantity surveyor, in fact, by profession. "We have to go out and sell our product," he says, and he clearly believes in the age-old commercial principle of developing a quality product and then working hard to sell it. There are two professional bodies in this field - the Federation of English

Language Course Organizations, which looks after summer-only courses, and the Association of Recognized English Language Schools which is made up of year-round schools, and Taylor's school belongs to both.

He advertises all over the world and a multi-lingual member of staff visits market countries each year. Teaching is by a director of studies and half a dozen permanent staff, augmented in the busy season by up to 25 teachers and lecturers working in their vacation.

In many a secondary school, I guess, the head of modern languages dreams of waving it all goodbye and moving to the sunny south to open a language school. From what I have seen, I would say forget it - unless you are equipped with a wide range of commercial and business skills, and the nerve and personality to go with them, plus a lot of "up-front" money.

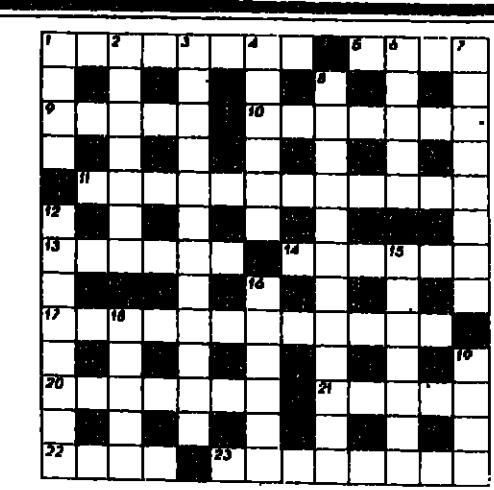
It is necessary, for example, to find and negotiate fair commissions with agents who will drum up business in other countries. Then there is the need to cope with ever-changing local

currency regulations, some of which are so severe as to debar particular nationalities entirely. "Inquiries from Morocco and Algeria, for example, go straight in the bin. They can't get the money out."

No, dear colleagues, do not try it. Far better to find an enterprising and courageous business friend with money to invest, buy him some tapes, get him revved up and then pop up at the right moment offering to be director of studies.

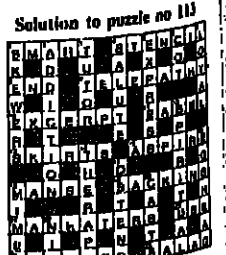
My inmostest announcement this time last year that I had taken up cycling again after a break of nearly 30 years provoked a certain amount of interest and welcome encouragement. This year I can report that I have moved on to time trialing. This, as you did not know, is a form of masochistic endeavour akin to hitting yourself about the head and body with a 12 lb hammer, in that it provokes a strong feeling of relief and well-being when you stop. My times so far are sluggish. However, I hereby claim 19 minutes and ten seconds for 50 miles as a record for serious headbatters over 45 until such time as someone writes in to challenge it.

## No 114 CROSSWORD by Ruth



- Across**
1. Serious converse (8)
  5. Word associated with poker - but it's not flush (4)
  9. Motor goes native (5)
  10. Isolate's favorite form of transit (7)
  11. Pass our plan for interior decoration (6)
  13. Property that goes with rank (6)
  14. Staff of office? (6)
  17. Butful feet? (5,7)
  20. Give a party a new constitution, perhaps (7)
  21. Lady-love with a bad back (5)
  22. Small bird that flies about in different directions (4)
  23. It's OK, there's no one left (3,5)

- Down**
1. Celebrity - like Oleg? (4)
  2. Do some evening work on board, perhaps (13)
  3. Give a spot (4,2,3,3)
  4. Temper resulting from upset team (6)
  6. A duty we no longer owe to the church (3)
  7. Entertainer, possibly Sumner (8)
  8. Round trip? (8,4)
  12. Field division that takes years to train (8)
  15. Dazed American general in retreat and exile (7)
  16. The Spanish man comes first in chess (6)
  18. Urge a new debate (3)
  19. Intent on being dishonest (4)



## Benefit cuts seen as bid to make YTS compulsory

by Biddy Passmore

Fears are growing among lecturers and careers officers that the Government is determined to force young people on to the Youth Training Scheme.

This follows reports that ministers are considering cuts in young people's benefits, along with moves to penalize youngsters who refuse training places. If proposals drawn up in the Department of Health and Social Security are implemented, the supplementary benefit of £15.80 now paid to unemployed 16 and 17-year-olds would be cut back nearer to the £13.15 unemployed parents get for children between 11 and 15.

That would make more tempting the £25 allowance paid under the Youth Training Scheme, which gets under way in the next couple of weeks. Ministers are said to be concerned that many young people may not consider it worth their while to join the scheme and may choose to stay at home instead.

The DHSS plans, which would also cut benefits to 18-year-olds by up to £7 or £8 a week, have not yet been approved by ministers. But, as they could offer a short-term saving of up to £200m a year, they may be brought into play during the discussions between spending departments and the Treasury which start next month.

But, even if those plans are not adopted, there will already be strong financial pressure on young people to join the scheme. A circular has gone out from the Department of Employment, reminding careers officers that they must notify the local benefit office if a teenager refuses a YTS place.

unreasonably or leaves it early. The young person's refusal could lead to a 40 per cent cut in benefit for six weeks, bringing it down to just £9.50.

Careers officers have already told their union, the National and Local Government Officers' Association, that this places them in an intolerable position, and have threatened to rebel. And Mr Paul Bennett, education officer of NATFHE, the college lecturers' union, said it would further colour young people's choices away from their best educational and vocational interest.

Mr Geoffrey Drain, NALGO's general secretary, has now written to Mr Len Murray, TUC general secretary, asking him to intervene. Mr Drain said the minister's letter was "a breach of the spirit, if not the letter, of the Youth Task Group report", which said there should be no compulsion on young people to join the scheme.

Mr Norman Tebbit, the Employment Secretary, decided some months ago that the same financial penalty should apply to young people refusing a YTS place as to those who refuse a job or other training. But careers officers have traditionally been able to exercise their discretion over notifying the benefit office. The terms of the circular make them fear they will no longer be able to do so.

Meanwhile, NALGO has scored its first victory in its attempts to get local authorities to pay YTS trainees "the going rate for the job". Hackney Council in London has agreed to pay up to 700 trainees £52 a week - the lowest rung on the pay ladder for 16-year-old recruits.

Young people who want to take up a flying career can now test their aptitude with a two-week course at the College of Air Training at Farnham, near Southampton. The course, which is open to all aged 17 or over, costs £1,250. Pictured above: Instructor Pat Patrick puts Douglas Ferguson through his paces.



  
**The British Association meeting in Brighton: Stuart MacLure on Growing Up in the Eighties**  
page 2; Reports pages 8, 9

## Special schools to pick up £2.5m micro windfall

by Diane Spencer

Handicapped children are to benefit from a £2.5m investment in special schools. It was announced at the British Association for the Advancement of Science annual meeting in Brighton this week.

This is the first time the Department of Industry has given money to special schools under its "Micros in school" scheme.

Mr Kenneth Baker, Minister for Technology, said resource centres would be established in special schools throughout the country. In addition, £2.5m would be spent on IT equipment, and another 175 "turtles" (an electronic toy linked to a microcomputer) would also be provided.

"For many disabled children, information technology means the ability to communicate with the outside world and to have some control of their own environment for the very first time," he told the meeting.

The extra funding was welcomed by Mr John Garrett, president of the National Council for Special Education. But he warned that teachers would need in-service training in its use. Mr Roy Hattersley, MP, one of the leading contenders for the leadership of the Labour Party,

told the meeting that comprehensive education was not enough to ensure equal opportunity in education. *Bob Doe writes.*

He called for massive "social investment" in disadvantaged areas such as the inner cities, with more teachers, books and resources for schools.

Teachers working in deprived areas should be paid more to compensate for the extra effort required. "It is absurd to pay more to the teacher who teaches Latin to small groups of highly motivated adults than to teachers who wrestle with 40 infants, a majority of whom cannot read English."

He accused the "prosperous and powerful class" of wilfully neglecting the less well off. "I remain convinced of the view that if Permanent Secretaries sent their children to state schools and their wives to state hospitals there would not have been the savage public expenditure cuts which we have endured in recent years."

On the abolition of public schools and private health care, "the entrenched institutions which permanently separate the rich and powerful from the rest of society," he said: "Freedom cannot encompass opportunity to do others harm."

## The party line speaks for all...

by Hilary Wilce

A curious pattern emerged from the replies given by prospective Parliamentary candidates to a pre-election questionnaire sent out by the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association.

Thirteen Conservative candidates appeared to have strikingly identical views on the whole gamut of education, from the role of central government to the problem of teacher morale. Was this chance, or was someone pulling the strings?

A clue appeared in a reply from Viscount Cranborne, returned for South Dorset who, in response to a question about whether he planned to visit schools regularly and talk to



teachers, had copied down, "It is assumed that candidates will give a simple reply in the affirmative."

All was finally made clear, however, by the reply from Mr Peter Horden, returned for Horsham, who returned a photo-copied sheet on which he had written, "I agree with these answers". The sheet was a text for candidates to use in reply to the AMMA's questions, sent out by Conservative Central Office, which, not surprisingly, rattled crisply on about keeping up standards and build-

ing on the achievements of the past four years.

The AMMA names the 13 guilty men in the current issue of its journal, *Report*. Among what it calls clones is one current minister - Mr Patrick Jenkin, Environment Secretary.

Mr Peter Smith, deputy general secretary, writes that he accepts that all political parties prepared briefings for their candidates. But, he adds: "The fact remains that 13 MPs were happy to seem to give personal replies to a questionnaire sent to them by local electors, when in reality they were parroting answers given to them by an anonymous Smith Square scribe."

Among the more thoughtful replies were those of the former Chancellor Sir Geoffrey Howe, now Foreign Secretary, who believed that one reason for teachers' low morale was the constant assertions of this by teacher unions. He rejected the notion that the relationship between central and local government was in any way unbalanced. Local authority would continue to be consulted over educational initiatives.

Tim Brinton, returned for Gravesham, and former member of the Commons Select Committee for Education, said central government should fund schools directly, "so that local democracy could become even more local."

## Turn of the shrew

The British Mammal Society and all its trappings

**Sporting chance**

Millfield School, with facilities for 40 different sports, is open to everyone in the summer

**Arts/Books**

Timothy O'Keeffe on Irish literature; Aina Taylor on Leopardi; D A N Jones on

Regency editing: Jonathan Ree on the history of education; Robin Buss on television; Finlay Macdonald on radio; Michael Clarke on sculpture; Brian Morton on Nikolaus Pevsner

**Resources/Media**

Susan Thomas visits a summer camp for gifted children; Jane Last on the assessment of children's reactions to television. Reviews of video programmes on how to cope with "the system" and development education





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In this shortened version of his presidential address to the Education Section of the British Association meeting in Brighton this week, Stuart Maclure starts from the premise that the most important social change of the past seven years has been the growth of unemployment, and in particular the collapse of 'ordinary' jobs for 16-year-old school-leavers.

The paper goes on to discuss the impact of this basic change in the economy on those now emerging from the schools. They face an extended transition from school to work, via the Youth Training Scheme, and this will have implications, he argues, for youth culture, for marriage and family life and for schools and their curricula: "for many there will be periods of employment interspersed with unemployment, with a return to further education, perhaps with opportunities for community work, with a mixture of part-time and temporary jobs, legal and illegal, with periods of elation and hope, poverty and despair."

In considering education's response to this changed employment scene, there seems little profit in discussing in polarized terms the question of whether some pupils should be "educated for unemployment" while others are prepared for work. This seems to suggest a kind of selection or predestination of a wholly unrealistic (as well as undesirable) kind. For many there will be periods of work and periods of unemployment. The need will be to educate people to be resilient and versatile enough to cope with the process of periodical job-changing including the likelihood that there will be time without paid work between jobs.

The problem is to translate a bland statement like this into realistic curricular terms. It is easy to talk about the need to learn how to learn, rather than be taught to assimilate facts for instant regurgitation. So much curriculum development seems to take the form of setting out a list of highly desirable (but quite possibly unattainable) aims and then using elementary *a priori* reasoning, choosing a set of educational activities which may be thought in an optimistic moment to point in the same direction. There is a singular lack of empirical evidence about exactly what educational experiences conduce to the survival skills of modern society.

What is true, of course, is that any number of different curricula can be taught by the right people and in the right way to build up confidence and curiosity – that these qualities can be fostered in one school, undermined in another, within, essentially, the same public curriculum because the hidden mutual influences of teachers, parents and pupils are different.

There is certainly a paradox in the present upsurge of pressure on schools to introduce courses based on vocational interests at exactly the time when the links between school and work are becoming more tenuous, with a Youth Training year interposed between the end of school and the beginning of "ordinary" employment.

This raises, of course, one of the recurring themes of education – the tension between educators who see their prime task in terms of the development of young people as people – intellectually, morally, aesthetically – and believe that if they, the teachers, do this conscientiously it will equip young people for life, including work; and the parents and the pupils themselves who interpret the signals of society as saying, first and foremost, give us the skills which will hold down a job.

The demand for relevance is one of the expressions of this tension. It surfaced in the context of the student unrest of the late 1960s as part of the students' case against the academics whom they accused of being out of touch with the real needs of ordinary graduates. It is behind much of the present talk about vocational and technical courses in secondary and further education.

But even if you do elevate the aim of acquiring skills relevant to employment above all others it is not clear that this is best served by vocational courses, given the great uncertainty about the future of work.

The inference has to be that what is needed is not vocational education, but this elusive thing called education for capability. The more the Royal Society of Arts describes it, the harder it becomes to pin down because – again – it is

## Growing up in the Eighties

by Stuart Maclure



evidence that this or that course achieves it.

What is not obvious is that the present academic course offers as good a basis for education for competence as it should; let alone the watered down academic course offered to those pupils who come within the old Newsom definition of those of average and below average ability.

It seems to me that the current excitement about technical and vocational education has to be seen, not as something aimed at transmitting specific skills, but as an acceptable basis for general education in the society of the 1980s which is deeply worried about employment and finds it easier to contemplate the pursuit of general education – including such "useless" aspects of general education as art and music – in a context which is publicly orientated towards employment in all its forms. The major task of curriculum reform is to restate the outline of the curriculum in forms which point towards competence and capability and self-reliance, using both the vocabulary and the processes of the world of work and the basic tools of education and continuing learning.

I have argued elsewhere that the need to rationalize the mixture of education and YTS which will be on offer for the 16-18 year age group will become increasingly pressing, but how long it will take will depend on how fast the logic of events demonstrates the absurdity of maintaining an examination system and a curriculum geared to an assumed need for large numbers of 16-year-old school-leavers.

The present system of assessment at 16 and 18 is well designed to thin out the number of potential entrants to higher education and ration expectations along with opportunities from one year to the next. But in reality it would make much more sense to keep more students within the education system longer and broaden the range of experiences within the educational system to include many of those now being set up within the YTS. I can well see the structural difficulties in bringing the schools and further education provision for the 16 to 18s and the YTS provision closer together, and the more entrenched and institutionalized the differences become the harder to change. But sooner or later – and preferably sooner – something will have to be done.

A lot will depend on the future of the 16-plus examination. It is already possible to hear enlightened industrial trainers commenting on the high quality of some of their YOP recruits, and noting that some of those with no examination results are more capable and quick to

learn. This is reported as if it were news; of course, it is nothing of the kind. So long as there was full employment it was one of the saving graces of the system that many people have always managed to succeed at work where they have failed at school. Now employers will have youngsters on "sale or return" for 12 months during which time they will assess their capacities and their suitability, not in some Platonic sense as people or as intellectuals, but as potential employees for specific jobs, and they will pay much less attention to previous exam results than to their own informed judgments.

When this happens – in theory at least – the significance of the 16-plus for large numbers of pupils should decline and if this coincided with the arrival of criterion-referenced testing and profiles, it might just conceivably open up the way for radical reform in which an external exam at 16 became a thing of the past.

It is certainly true that the logic of Sir Keith Joseph's anguish on behalf of the "bottom 40 per cent", whose poor performance the examination system now certifies, points to finding ways of reducing the importance of external exams, not extending them to ever-increasing numbers and it will be a crass failure of imagination if those responsible for the examination system fail to recognize that the YTS eliminates some of the earlier requirements for a school-leaving examination.

Of course, there is another way in which things could go – more selective, more differentiated, more elitist: with the comprehensive school split three ways between the academic line heading for higher education, a technical and vocational line taking another 30 per cent who would head for technician training, and a third "general" or "modern" or "senior elementary" line for whom the Youth Training Scheme would be more or less tailor-made.

Such a reincarnated tripartitism would not require the restoration of the 11-plus; it could be comprehended within the comprehensive school. It is a basic requirement of the MSC's Technical and Vocational Education Initiative that it should be open to pupils of all levels of ability and there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Mr David Young, the chairman of the Manpower Services Commission, nor yet of the members of his TVEI steering board. But it will be one thing to make the offering, another actually to secure an intake in which all levels of ability (as the schools measure ability) are represented.

Time will tell how successful TVEI is in achieving its object of permeating the whole

curriculum, not just siphoning off a technical stream. There is already some reason to believe that some schemes will be much more successful than others in this respect. And, when the attempt is made to apply the concept which underlies the generously financed TVEI projects more widely across the system (wide, the generous external finance) it will be difficult to present these courses in the glamorous way which now plays on the MSC venture. (It will be a typical piece of bad luck for the DES if the department were to find itself wrestling once back from the MSC in circumstances which more or less guarantee the venture will lose: priceless Hawthorne effect).

It could be that a more sharply differentiated secondary curriculum – implying that as weight is to be put on meeting a diversity of needs than guaranteeing a shared experience: will accord more closely to the social attitudes of the 1980s than the more egalitarian curriculum which inspired the move to comprehensive education in the 1960s.

What will be interesting to watch, not only relation to the TVEI, but also in relation to examination reform generally, and to curriculum development and planning, is the extent to which 14 is allowed to become (or remain) a crucial decision point in secondary education: how the need to produce "relevant" and "challenging" courses for the pupils who will need particularly well in any 16-plus exams is fit into plans for a core curriculum; and how much of the apple the core should be allowed to displace.

The paper concludes by returning to the theme, for young people reaching maturity without reliable expectation of employment.

It is of prime importance that the distribution of jobs and incomes should accord with the human needs of young men and women entering adulthood in these times of social and economic stress. It is not enough to rely upon "the free hand" of laissez-faire economics and the minimal provision of welfare benefits to take care of the many thousands who stand to suffer especially in areas once totally dependent on heavy industry. Too much is at stake.

It will clearly be necessary to provide more subsidized alternatives to unemployment. The makes suggestions for new forms of community work programmes attractive as ways of distributing some of the money appropriated for supplementary benefits on forms of community activity. Ideally, there should be ways of paying some of the 18 to 25-year-olds a social wage for community work instead of an unearned dole.

Difficulties abound, but they exist to be overcome by anyone who recognizes the necessity of providing self-respect for those who emerge from YTS and still have no jobs to go to and those who still find themselves in their early twenties in the ranks of the long-term unemployed.

This is only one aspect of a second and much larger problem – certainly not one confined to young people: how to mitigate the obvious injustices in a community where the majority are in full-time work and getting richer and richer while the economy struggles for recovery, while a minority, which includes many of the young, are most vulnerable, get poorer and poorer.

There are some real psychological hurdles to overcome. The psychology needed to reconstruct the economy and create new markets and new employment is aggressive and entrepreneurial. The psychology needed to adjust to the social consequences of the collapse of the economic system and the creation of another, more compassionate and understanding.

The aggressive pursuit of new opportunities and new wealth creation goes at present on a punitive attitudes towards the unemployed and the philosophy of public finance which assumes the public services and social benefits must be curbed lest they bespeak resources needed to fuel the private consumption on which individual incentives thrive.

But if high unemployment levels are to be accepted – however regrettably – as part of the traumatic changes overtaking the British economy, a system of public benefits, which respects the humanity and human dignity of the recipients, is an elementary requirement for a tolerable society. It remains to be seen if both the compassion and aggressive, tough-minded pursuit of adaptation and enterprise can go together. It is not necessarily obvious that they can. Unfortunately neither will suffice by itself

Nick Wood reports on differing Government reactions to two exam board proposals on the 16-plus

## No ... to multi-ethnic section in English

The Government has dismissed the exam boards' attempt to give the proposed new 16-plus exam in English an explicitly multicultural dimension. Draft proposals governing the conduct of exams in the subject, approved by the Joint Council for 16-plus National Criteria, and submitted to ministers at the beginning of the year, contained a separate section on "English in a multicultural society".

But last week, Sir Keith Joseph, the

Education Secretary, in a letter to Sir Wilfred Cockcroft, chairman of the Secondary Examinations Council, said that there was no need for the guidelines for English to make specific reference to the position of the ethnic minorities.

The letter said the section should be deleted with the points it was making being incorporated elsewhere in the guidelines or included in the general criteria which will lay down the

framework for all exams at 16-plus. In addition the letter from Sir Keith and Mr Nicholas Edwards, the Welsh Secretary, said: "The Secretaries of State recognize the importance of the issues raised in section C (English in a multicultural society) of the draft criteria statement but question whether this is the most appropriate way of alerting examining groups to the needs of candidates from ethnic minorities."

The controversial section contains four main points. It reminds examining groups they will need to:

- Consider offering exams in English as a second language to candidates who are not native English speakers;
- Bear in mind the linguistic and cultural diversity of candidates when drawing up syllabuses and framing exams; It also says:
- Ability in the use of non-standard English. It also says: particularly in

oral tests, should count towards final marks; and

- Literature syllabuses should not be restricted to the works of English-speaking writers.

Sir Keith and Mr Edwards replied that the first two points should be covered by the general criteria. The third should apply to all candidates, not just those from ethnic minorities, and could be included by a reworking of the overall aims of the subject. They thought the fourth was redundant because it reiterated an earlier statement about the content of literature courses.

Elsewhere, the Secretaries of State stress the importance of candidates demonstrating their mastery of standard English in both written and spoken forms.

They accept the case for oral assessment but look to the Secondary Examinations Council to resolve doubts about whether valid and reliable assessments of candidates in this area can be carried out.

Provided the SEC agrees, they are prepared to allow coursework to count towards a candidate's final mark. They also want the council to give "firm guidance" on whether every candidate should take the same question paper or whether there should be a range of papers tailored by candidates' abilities.

Turning to the proposals for English literature, the Secretaries of State say that they are again prepared to accept coursework for assessment purposes, provided the SEC agrees. But they believe literature exams will require differentiated question papers to reflect the varying degrees of difficulty of the texts chosen for study.

## Yes ... to draft guidelines on maths

But Ministers also hope more Cockcroft recommendations will be taken up

Draft guidelines for maths exams at 16-plus have been welcomed by ministers.

Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary, and Mr Nicholas Edwards, the Welsh Secretary, are evidently pleased that the exam boards have drawn heavily on the findings of the Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of Mathematics in Schools, which was chaired by Sir Wilfred Cockcroft, now chairman of the Secondary Examinations Council.

Nevertheless, they would like the final criteria for mathematics to go further down the road mapped out in Sir Wilfred's report.

In their letter to him last week, inviting the SEC to comment on the criteria submitted by the boards, the Secretaries of State suggest that the aims of the subject be broadened to include carrying out extended pieces of work, mathematical investigations and problem solving. Courses should also teach the use of mathematics as the language of science.

The SEC is asked to advise on whether these additional aims, together with performance in oral work, should be made specific targets of assessment.

Ministers have their doubts about the two lists of topics that the exam boards, drawing on the Cockcroft foundation list, have used to outline the subject's content.

They fear that list one – the basic list – might be too lengthy for some of the least able pupils to approach with confidence. They also question whether the typical grade three candidate (equivalent to an O level pass) will be



Sir Wilfred Cockcroft

able to cope with a syllabus made up of all the items in lists one and two.

On the other hand, they want the board to give clearer guidance on the syllabuses for the most able pupils to ensure they are fully stretched.

Ministers show surprising enthusiasm for school-based assessment of mathematics, suggesting such an



Sir Keith Joseph

approach could be particularly valuable in marking oral and practical work in the subject. They acknowledge it could put up costs.

They also question whether timed, written papers should be the only compulsory element in assessment schemes and account for at least half of the marks.



Christopher Price

## Poly post for Price

Mr Christopher Price, who was Labour MP for Lewisham West and chairman of the Commons Select Committee on Education until he was defeated at the June election, has taken up a temporary post at the Polytechnic of the South Bank in London.

He has a six-month appointment to oversee policy on biotechnology and use his journalistic talents to advise the polytechnic on public relations. As biotechnology coordinator, Mr Price will be in the happy position of supervising the polytechnic's contribution to an initiative recommended by his old committee.

## Pay deadlock

A 13.5 per cent claim by chief education officers has gone to arbitration as a result of the breakdown of conciliation efforts last week. The local authorities have offered a rise of about 4.9 per cent to cover a pay period starting on July 1.

Senior education officers have been worried that their pay deals have been less generous than those of teachers, and that headteachers of larger schools and college principals can earn more than chief education officers.

## Father accuses I.e.a. of bias against Catholics

by Biddy Passmore

The father of a Roman Catholic boy who has been refused admission to a county school has accused Coventry education authority of religious discrimination.

Mr Tony Ryan, who has appealed to the Ombudsman, is a lapsed Catholic and does not want his son, Justin, to be educated at a Roman Catholic secondary school.

He says his son was automatically allocated a place at Bishop Ullathorne, a mixed RC comprehensive school four miles from his home, because he had attended St John Vianney RC primary school.

When Mr Ryan expressed a preference for Woodlands, a large and academic county boys' comprehensive which is five minutes' walk away, his application was turned down because the school was full. And when the case went to an appeals committee in June, it was rejected.

The council has since offered Justin a place at other county schools in the city but Mr Ryan refuses to consider them. "I'm not interested in alternative schools," he said last week. "I'm not going to Woodlands, he's not going anywhere."

A spokesman for Coventry council explained this week that a child could not be in two catchment areas – for a Catholic school and a county school –

at once. But Justin would have been fitted into Woodlands if there had been room, he said. It was a very popular school whose intake had been reduced this year from 300 to 240 to match a large drop in the number of local boys.

There had been 34 appeals for Woodlands school, of which 10 had been successful. Only one of these concerned a Roman Catholic child but that was an exceptional case involving a foster mother with handicapped children.

The Ryans' case highlights a problem caused by the separation of admissions for Catholic (voluntary) and county schools. Children attending Roman Catholic primary schools are always assumed to want a place at the nearest Catholic secondary. If their parents then express a preference for a county school, the council will usually do its best to fit the child in – but he may, as in this case, have to take place in the queue behind children from outside the catchment area with a brother or sister at the school or some other special reason for wanting it.

Coventry council will review its admissions policy this autumn and may then decide to warn parents of the implications of choosing a Roman Catholic primary school for their child.

## Asbestos threat shuts school

A primary school in Drumchapel, Scotland, has been closed after maintenance work exposed asbestos in the building.

The parents of the 350 children attending St Pius Primary School, were told that pupils would be sent to other schools while work on the school was being completed.

When the pupils returned to school last week the asbestos had been sealed

and the school passed as safe by health and safety officials, but work had not been completed.

Strathclyde Region were informed that the work would take six or seven weeks and were left with the options of closing the school for that period or trying to complete the work at weekends over a much longer period. It was decided that the simplest solution was to close the school.



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PLATFORM

Politically the independent schools are safe for at least another five years and probably more. I doubt whether any serious political party will ever again contain in its manifesto a crude commitment to abolish private schools. But the main thrust of political attack from the Left, and possibly from the Centre parties as well, will be on "public subsidies" or the diversion of "ratepayers' or tax-payers' money for the purposes of private education. Economically the independent schools are reasonably sound. The late 1970s saw an expansion, particularly where day pupils were concerned, with the absorption of many former direct grant and some grammar schools. The early 1980s have not been easy but the effects of a deep recession have only slightly dented this expansion.

Schools may be tempted to sit tight in a rather complacent *status quo*. This might seem prudent. On the other hand the independent schools could use the party political lull and their position of comparative strength to re-grasp the old nettle of a closer partnership with the maintained sector.

There is no official independent school policy and the views in this article are my own. But I believe the attempt should be made and would involve give-and-take on both sides. The basis for it should not be any central government scheme (as in the past with the Fleming and Newsom proposals) but informal links between schools in both sectors at local level to meet the considered needs of the community.

Such initiatives have flourished in the past because the private sector has given the impression that it has nothing to learn from the maintained. Both sectors have a great deal to learn from each other.

The main obstacles to a closer partnership are the introverted natures of schools themselves. Most are small communities (whether run privately or by local authorities) and are quite understandably absorbed in their own affairs. There is often a sad ignorance among teachers in both sectors of how the other half works and, more alarming, an indifference based on conceived lack of relevance to the problems which each sector faces. The introduction of comprehensive education throughout most of the maintained sector has led to an apparent lack of common philosophy and has destroyed bonds between selective schools which in the past bridged the two sectors.

Attempts by the independent sector to put themselves across as being more than just the boys' public schools are hampered by these famous schools not only fascinating the media but also being the main targets for political attack.

The first step, therefore, to closer links must involve schools at local level getting together to reassess a common philosophy. Whatever their differences, schools need a common front to face the new and increasingly rapid changes which are likely to transform society over the next 10 years or so. They include: a radical reduction in the number of those on full-time paid employment; the consequent collapse of the work ethic as more than half the country's school leavers fail to find jobs; the increased amount of spare time leading to both boredom and a greater demand for leisure facilities; the need to train adults as well as children in the new technologies and the need, above all, for any society which claims to be "caring" to make special provision for those most likely to be vulnerable to these changes: ethnic minorities, the old, the handicapped, the illiterate and the children from single-parent homes.

Schools are well-placed to meet these challenges. There is no reason why the education of mature students, for example, should be catered for only in universities, polytechnics, tertiary and other colleges of further education. There is no reason why schools (and sixth-form colleges) should not view the education they provide as being equally relevant to those over the age of 18 as to those between the ages of 14 and 18.

accommodation in the face of falling rolls." Sir Keith commented. He was not persuaded that the potential advantages claimed for the new system were sufficiently certain to warrant the introduction of a uniform 11-16 system and the loss of the sixth forms so strongly supported by parents.

Lancashire changed from Tory to Labour control in the May 1981 local elections. The Labour majority submitted its plans for a tertiary system - one of the main planks of the party's education policy - at the beginning of this year.

## Tertiary plan turned down

Lancashire County Council's plans to set up a tertiary college in the Rossendale Valley have been rejected by Sir Keith Joseph.

In a letter to the county council earlier this month, the Education Secretary said he had turned down the proposal because of "the widespread and popular support" for keeping the sixth forms at Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School and Haslington High School.

The proposals were "primarily a matter of reorganizing the pattern of provision rather than of rationalizing

European laws and policies could offer a lot of muscle to people in the United Kingdom who are pressing for equality in work experience, careers guidance, and practical skills training in schools, a new guide on women's rights advises.

Although education is not specifically mentioned in the Treaty of Rome, policy developments have led the EEC to become highly involved in schooling as well as in vocational training, the book points out.

But as yet the powers of European law have not been brought fully into play in enforcing the rights of women.

While the Equal Treatment Directive says there must be equality of access to vocational training, no test case has been brought before the European Court of Justice to establish what this means.

It is possible, the authors suggest, that it could cover such practices as providing only domestic science equipment, and not heavy craft facilities, in girls' schools, or offering differing careers advice and work experience opportunities to boys and girls.

The guide gives a clear and concise outline of European structures and policies, and warns that women could lose important rights if a future

## Equality campaigners told to look at Europe

by Hilary Wilce

European laws and policies could offer a lot of muscle to people in the United Kingdom who are pressing for equality in work experience, careers guidance, and practical skills training in schools, a new guide on women's rights advises.

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## Jewish communities join forces

by Bert Lodge

A new private Jewish day school which is to open in London next year represents a triumph of co-operation between the Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities.

The school will be situated in a building adjoining the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Synagogue in Mark Lane but is also being supported by the Bayswater Synagogue.

The Spanish and Portuguese synagogue congregation is Sephardi, originally from North Africa and the Middle East as well as the Iberian peninsula while the Bayswater Synagogue belongs to the Polish-German Ashkenazi community.

Rabbi Abraham Levy, however, principal, explained: "The tension arose for the Sephardim to view themselves as the aristocracy of Anglo-Jewry, the Ashkenazim as its viceroy."

"Faced, however, with a steadily young Jewish population in inner London, leaders of the neighbouring Malda Vale synagogues have elected to pool their resources in an independent venture that may signal a new era of Anglo-Jewish unity."

## Franked for failure

by Diane Spencer

The inner city school system is a franking machine which stamps 'certified failure' on most of its pupils, according to the author of a book published this week about life in Hackney, east London.

Seven out of 10 Hackney children left school labelled as failures in 1978, Mr Paul Harrison said. 28 per cent of fifth formers left with no certificate - more than twice the national average

of 13 per cent. Yet in primary and secondary schools, there is no evidence that educational provision is worse than elsewhere in London. Home backgrounds are the dominant factor, he says in his book, "Inside the Inner City" (Penguin £3.95). Schools with largely working class catchment areas have a much lower standard of intake than those in middle class areas.

Women's Rights and the EEC: A Guide for Women in the UK, published by Rights of Women Europe, 1983. £5.00.

Philip Venning visits a remarkable school for the children of wealthy Arabs

## The exam factory where overtime is compulsory

What is almost certainly Britain's most expensive private school is soon to open in Wiltshire, offering a diet of Lebanese food and a degree of academic cramming unheard of even in the most notorious "exam factories."

In return for fees of at least £6,000 a year, children will be put through a strict regime of computer-marked tests and exams, centrally controlled curriculum and rigid teaching methods, all designed to ensure that even the most unpromising children find a place in higher education.

The International School of Choueifat opens on September 26 in Ashwick Hall, a former approved school between Bath and Chippenham. It is the fifth in a series of such schools, based on an original founded in Lebanon in 1886 by a Protestant clergyman, the Reverend Tannous Saad.

The British school, the first of the schools of Choueifat outside the Middle East, has been started expressly to prepare the children of wealthy Arab businessmen for places in American and to a lesser extent British universities and colleges.

All teaching will be in English, and though the principal will be an Arab, the academic side is being supervised by his deputy, Mr Rodney Priest.

formerly a chemistry master at George Ward School, Melksham. Of the 17 teachers so far appointed, 12 are British.

Ashwick Hall is a nineteenth century mansion in a large estate, and the school is spending millions on creating sports fields, laboratories, and other facilities suitable for a co-educational boarding school taking pupils from the age of six.

But the high fees (its closest rival is Millfield whose top fees can approach £5,000) are not paying for gold bath taps or deep pile carpets.

"This is not Hilton for the kids," said Mr Priest, agreeing with an Arab colleague that luxury would make the children lazy. And laziness - among teachers as much as the children - is strictly forbidden.

Though all children go through a battery of different entry tests, the intention is primarily to weed out those who are unwilling to work. This is seen as more important than academic ability.

"The school prides itself in accepting and successfully teaching children that could be classified as slightly below 'average ability'," says the school's prospectus.

To ensure that no child lags behind the school has installed a Wang computer system that will assess his or her



Left: Rodney Priest. Above: a classroom scene at Ashwick Hall

similar ban on parents approaching individual teachers about their children. All questions go through Mr Priest, who can produce the child's up-to-date computer file at a moment's notice.

The immediate uncertainty facing the school is how many pupils it will have at the start of the term. It has already been running a summer school for 74 children, providing holiday coaching, and is expecting somewhere in the region of 100 to 200 pupils full time.

It is unlikely to appeal to more fundamental Muslims, however. Girls and boys are strictly supervised whenever they are together, but the school is not a religious foundation, and the atmosphere is Western and cosmopolitan.

Its values are not those of the traditional British public school, and similarities between the two are largely coincidental. For example, the Choueifat school uses a disciplinary system based on sneaking. Pupils are expected to report persistent offenders and the teachers are required to encourage it.

progress through constant tests and exams. Any weakness is immediately corrected through intensive private tuition, outside normal class time.

"We expect the teachers to exert high academic pressure throughout the school starting from nursery and kindergarten," the prospectus adds. "There is less stress on socializing and more stress on academic achievement - that is, less play and more work."

Continuous assessment applies to staff as well. They face the prospect of having a senior member of staff regularly sitting through their lessons, to keep an eye on their punctuality and their readiness to smile, and to ensure they do not deviate one jot from the centrally-controlled curriculum.

The curriculum is common to all

five Choueifat schools, and is designed to be a suitable preparation for the International Baccalaureate as well as GCE O levels and American high school diplomas.

Though a fairly wide range of subjects will be available (with the particular exception of craft work, home economics, or similar subjects), the school's main emphasis will be on maths and languages.

French will be taught as well as English and Arabic. Drama, dance, and music will have an important place along with sports and PE, but these will be extra-curricular.

One feature of the school's approach is an absolute ban on pupils taking notes (teachers have to provide full notes for every lesson), and a

## Women not a factor in college row

The much-publicized disagreement between a fellow of Peterhouse College, Cambridge, and Lord Dacre, Master of the college, is believed to centre on personal difficulties rather than matters of policy such as the admission of women.

Dr Hallard Croft, director of studies in mathematics for the past 20 years, wrote a strongly-worded letter to Lord Dacre (better known as the historian, Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper). This so angered Lord Dacre that he removed Dr Croft's name from the list of fellows to be re-elected this autumn.

Normally the re-election of fellows every five years is a formality. But Dr Croft's absence from the list to be re-elected means that he will technically cease to be a fellow before the start of term.

But it is thought that Dr Croft will be reinstated when the college's governing body next meets in October. Dr Croft and Lord Dacre do not differ much in their strongly conservative views. Both are opposed to the admission of women to the college, although the reform has now been approved by the governing body and the necessary change to the statutes simply awaits the approval of the Privy Council.

## Parents save Liverpool primary

Sir Keith Joseph, Education Secretary, has given in to pressure from Liverpool parents and the Labour-controlled education authority and agreed to renege Harrington County Primary School.

Parents have been mounting a round-the-clock vigil to keep the school open since its closure was abruptly announced 24 hours before the end of last term. Last week, they reopened it for summer activities and managed to attract more than 100 children (the school previously had 70 pupils).

The school's reprieve, which follows recent meetings at the Department of Education with Mr Bob Dunn, schools minister, was agreed on condition that Liverpool education authority find suitable alternative premises for it from next September - and fund it properly in the meantime.

The department's letter also makes it clear that Harrington has been saved on the understanding that Liverpool will close primary schools elsewhere. It stresses "the disproportionate expense and the educational disadvantages which flow from the City's rapidly falling number of primary age pupils" and the difficulties of trying to deal with the problem piecemeal.

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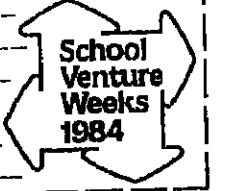
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## Concern on special needs

by Diane Spencer

At least half the students in teacher training receive no instruction on how to teach children with special educational needs in ordinary schools, says a report published this week.

The Royal Society for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR) surveyed 130 colleges, polytechnics and university education departments between last October and April 1983 to discover the extent of initial and in-service training regarding children with special educational needs.

Mrs Judith Male, the association's education officer who wrote the report, said this week: "It would be disgraceful if opponents of integration were able to claim that this policy is a failure, not because handicapped children are unable to cope with ordinary schools, but because teachers are inadequately prepared and trained to cope with handicapped children."

RADAR is concerned that integration should succeed, she said. The report showed that training had improved since the publication of the Warnock report in 1978, but it was still inadequate. The association would prefer a compulsory element for special educational needs in initial training, she added.

## Placing service gets underway

An advisory service for the thousands of young people who have just received their A level results is now operating throughout the country until the end of September.

The Advanced Further Education Information Service - a partnership between polytechnics, colleges, local education authorities and the Department of Education - offers information on vacancies in degree and diploma courses.

More than 800 advisory officers will help students whose results are either better or worse than expected to find a suitable place. Names, addresses and telephone numbers of these officers are available from local education or careers officers.

## Local education authority estimates 1983/84

Local Education Authority	Pupil/Teacher Ratio		Spending per child on books, educational & PE equipment, stationery & materials		Total unit costs (net)	
	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec
London ILEA	17.2	13.0	39	88	1113	1613
Outer London boroughs						
Barking & Dagenham	20.8	18.1	22	39	813	1085
Barnet	20.2	14.2	25	44	781	1138
Bexley	24.1	17.0	22	40	881	885
Brent	17.0	13.6	33	50	888	1313
Bromley	22.9	15.9	25	46	715	1049
Croydon	22.2	16.7	23	41	735	1052
Ealing	18.3	14.8	27	50	808	1175
Enfield	23.4	15.4	24	49	705	1041
Haringey	17.8	13.0	31	55	1008	1380
Harrow	23.5	14.3	22	50	882	1163
Havering	23.8	18.1	24	48	892	1094
Hillingdon	21.9	15.8	25	46	781	1103
Hounslow	18.6	14.9	26	40	825	1082
Kingston-upon-Thames	21.9	18.4	23	58	700	874
Merion	21.8	18.0	25	40	771	828
Newham	18.1	13.4	28	47	821	1288
Redbridge	22.3	16.9	21	43	682	1092
Richmond-upon-Thames	20.8	16.2	21	37	787	1001
Sutton	24.8	17.1	25	38	855	872
Waltham Forest	18.9	13.5	25	46	803	1263
Total (20)	21.0	15.3	25	45	784	1109
Metropolitan districts						
Greater Manchester						
Bolton	23.7	16.3	23	38	815	820
Bury	23.8	18.0	18	36	822	889
Manchester	23.8	15.8	25	54	775	1159
Oldham	21.1	15.5	25	38	877	897
Rochdale	22.7	14.7	21	36	884	1057
Salford	21.4	18.8	21	48	898	889
Stockport	24.2	18.8	21	48	898	889
Tameside	22.3	15.8	23	32	882	832
Trafford	22.0	16.2	15	27	844	938
Wigan	21.7	15.5	21	37	870	959
Merseyside						
Knowsley	20.3	15.1	20	37	743	1072
Liverpool	20.5	18.9	23	41	814	1080
St Helens	22.9	15.9	16	27	827	943
Sefton	21.1	16.7	18	36	847	918
Wirral	22.4	17.6	21	30	841	800
South Yorkshire						
Barnsley	20.1	18.7	21	32	770	915
Doncaster	21.8	18.8	22	34	799	894
Rotherham	22.2	18.8	20	31	805	885
Sheffield	20.5	15.8	32	40	812	1052
Tyne and Wear						
Newcastle upon Tyne	19.4	18.4	25	35	748	954
North Tyneside	19.8	16.1	14	27	825	1102
South Tyneside	20.2	15.0	24	38	741	885
Sunderland	19.3	15.1	21	41	748	1027
	21.8	16.0	17	30	681	833
West Midlands						
Birmingham	21.4	15.8	12	23	683	914
Coventry	22.9	18.2	22	34	723	890
Dudley	21.7	17.1	17	34	698	838
Sandwell	21.1	15.4	21	36	714	883
Solihull	22.0	14.0	18	38	672	887
Walsall	18.5	14.0	20	40	788	1072
Wolverhampton	18.6	15.0	29	48	830	1008
West Yorkshire						
Bradford	20.2	17.9	17	30	753	947
Calderdale	21.4	17.5	17	28	673	878
Kirklees	22.5	17.3	10	33	644	845
Leeds	17.5	18.7	9	14	635	884
Wakefield	22.2	17.4	18	24	683	784
Total (38)	21.3	16.3	20	33	705	980
English counties						
Avon	23.2	18.3	20	35	674	983
Bedfordshire	23.7	17.5	23	39	738	971
Berkshire	22.7	18.0	21	38	678	872
Buckinghamshire	24.0	16.1	24	41	650	1018
Cambridgeshire	23.5	16.8	16	31	628	826
Cheshire	22.5	18.9	20	35	701	862
Clavdon	23.5	16.6	24	36	876	970
Cornwall	21.1	18.1	28	38	607	971
Cumbria	22.4	17.5	28	38	717	921
Derbyshire	23.5	17.0	17	30	618	818
Devon	23.8	17.1	24	34	659	804
Dorset	21.6	18.7	18	28	688	899
East Sussex	21.4	17.0	22	39	648	835
Essex	24.0	17.2	18	34	610	833
Gloucestershire	22.8	17.3	22	34	634	858
Hampshire	23.7	18.8	16	32	638	938
Hertfordshire	25.7	18.0	16	31	627	885
Hertfordshire	22.3	15.9	20	35	670	887
Humber	20.8	16.8	24	38	722	936
Isle of Wight	22.5	18.3	27	41	705	811
Kent	23.7	17.1	23	43	658	898
Lancashire	22.4	18.9	21	36	622	830
Leicestershire	22.9	18.2	22	37	678	885
Lincolnshire	23.3	17.5	18	35	618	828
Norfolk	23.1	17.6	20	33	682	947
Northamptonshire	22.0	18.7	20	38	629	821
Northumberland	23.1	17.5	18	29	675	984
North Yorkshire	22.2	18.6	24	38	708	988
Nottinghamshire	21.0	18.6	33	48	728	983
Shropshire	21.2	17.2	25	41	684	888
Somerset	21.2	17.2	19	29	654	854
Suffolk	23.8	17.5	31	46	614	889
Suffolk	22.0	16.4	29	36	738	844
Surrey	22.1	17.3	20	40	688	881
Warwickshire	21.8	18.3	19	38	656	1004
West Sussex	22.2	17.2	19	38	684	818
Wiltshire	22.2	17.2	22	32	613	891
Wiltshire	23.3	17.0	22	34	616	918
Total (39)	22.7	18.8	21	37	658	940
Welsh counties						
Cardiff	22.7	17.0	25	41	709	943
Ceredigion	18.7	18.0	22	36	745	1012
Gwynedd	20.8	15.7	18	33	746	1010
Merioneth	18.6	15.7	16	30	742	878
Mid Glamorgan	20.8	18.5	18	33	766	988
Powys	18.5	15.9	22	37	681	1075
South Glamorgan	22.8	16.5	18	34	843	949
West Glamorgan	20.8	15.3	23	37	746	1102
Total (8)	20.7	16.1	20	35	735	983
National aggregates						
London (21)	19.7	14.8	28	52	886	1281
Met. Districts (38)	21.3	16.3	20	33	708	959
Non-Met. Councils (47)	22.5	18.7	21	37	687	945
Total (104)	21.8	16.3	22	37	703	982

## Scots glue-sniff ruling could ease legal fix

by Biddy Passmore

The ruling by a Scottish High Court judge that selling glue-sniffing "kits" to children is a crime under Scottish law may help the Government out of a legal impasse - at least north of the border.

Ministers have seriously considered whether a ban could be placed on selling or supplying solvents to children like the ban which exists for alcohol and tobacco.

But they have so far concluded it would be impossible to frame a law that could be enforced, chiefly because almost any volatile substance, including some common household products, can be abused.

The only statute specifically concerned with glue-sniffing was passed in May and simply adds solvent abuse to the grounds on which children may

be referred to children's panels for compulsory care in Scotland.

Last week, however, Lord Avonside, sitting in the High Court in Edinburgh, said the common law should be used where Parliament was having difficulty in dealing with a problem.

He ruled that if substances were supplied to someone knowing that he would use them to endanger health and life, the supplier had acted criminally under the common law.

Lord Avonside, rejected pleas by brothers Khalid and Ahmed Raja, who had challenged their indictment of supplying at least 18 children aged between eight and 15 with solvents - particularly glue - and bags for inhalation at their shop in Glasgow earlier this year.

It was also alleged that in exchange for the solvents they received stolen goods from nine of the children.

Defence counsel had argued that supplying glue-sniffing kits was not a crime under Scottish law - a plea which was successful in a similar case in 1978.

Lord Avonside, granted the brothers leave to appeal to three High Court judges - who may overturn his ruling - and postponed their trial until October 17.

The Scottish ruling cannot set a

precedent in English law, as the two legal systems are different. Nor is it clear if English common law could be interpreted in the same way, as supplying solvents would not appear to come under the heading of "supplying dangerous drugs" or "administering a noxious substance". So far, no English case involving glue-sniffing has come to the High Court.

Meanwhile, Department of Health and Social Security ministers are still analysing the responses to a consultative document on ways to control the use of glue-sniffing, which is said to have caused the deaths of 120 young people since 1980.

Many of those consulted, including the National Association of Head Teachers, urged the Government not to overreact. It was thought that too much publicity might encourage children to experiment. The problem was best dealt with professionally.

An English Private Member's Bill providing for the temporary detention of young people found in public places under the influence of "toxic substances" was introduced on July 20 by Mr Neville Trotter, Conservative MP for Tynemouth which, like Glasgow, has a high incidence of glue-sniffing. But it is too low down the list to stand any chance of becoming law.

## Slight improvement in secondary staffing ratio

Pupil/teacher ratios are starting to improve in secondary schools because of falling rolls, according to figures just released by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

Estimates for the current financial year show that the ratio in secondary schools should improve from 16.5 pupils per teacher to 16.4 between January 1983 and January 1984. This is because the number of pupils over 11 will fall by 2.1 per cent, from 4m to 3.9m, while the number of teachers will fall by only 0.7 per cent, from 241,000 to 239,500.

In primary schools, where rolls will fall by 3 per cent, teacher numbers are expected to drop by 1.2 per cent, producing a continuation in last year's improvement in ratios. Between last January and next, they should have narrowed from 22.3 to 21.9.

Overall, the figures show that the 104 English and Welsh L.E.A.s plan to spend 5.6 per cent more this year than last (a total of £11,718m, of which £735m will be met by specific grants). Authorities have 200,000 fewer pupils and 440 fewer schools on which to spend the money. But the increase does not quite keep pace with an average inflation rate of 6 per cent. The biggest proportional rises in spending are on the careers service, sports and social facilities, post-school education and the educational psychology service which are

budgeted to get increases ranging from 11.7 to 14.2 per cent.

Startling differences between authorities continue. Brent has the best primary pupil-teacher ratio this year, at 17.1, just beating the Inner London Education Authority at 17.2.1. The worst is still in Hereford and Worcester, with 25.7, which recently joined the select group of authorities whose cuts are causing HM Inspectors particular concern.

In secondary schools, the best ratio of 13 pupils per teacher is found in both ILEA and Haringey and the worst in Leeds, with 18.7.1. Leeds is also spending least on books and equipment at both primary and secondary level (£9 and £14 respectively, the same figures as last year), although its primary pupil/teacher ratio is one of the best in the country.

The most generous spender on books and equipment, as even in the ILEA, which also tops the league on spending per pupil in both primary and secondary schools. Next comes Haringey, which just exceeds the £1,000 per pupil mark at primary level and spends £1,380 at secondary level, the primary sector, which is planning to spend only £396, and Wakefield in the secondary sector (£784).

## IN BRIEF

### Good Samaritans

A new 30-page booklet provides information on the industrial and professional organizations that offer financial help to higher education students. "Sponsorship 1984" lists the grants available to students taking a first degree or BTEC higher course in subjects such as computer studies, catering and engineering.

Copies have been distributed to schools, colleges and careers offices but single copies are also available from: The Careers and Occupational Information Centre, Manpower Services Commission, Dept C W, c/o Papworth Industries, Papworth Everard, Cambridge CB3 8RG; £1.50 inc. postage.

### Self-defence

The women's committee of a Labour-controlled London borough is urging all secondary schools in the area to provide self-defence classes for girls as part of their physical education. Camden Council women's committee has written to the Inner London Education Authority and all local head-teachers asking that its suggestion be adopted.

### Foreign students

The number of overseas students fell by 22 per cent between 1978-79, when full-cost fees were introduced, and 1981-82. Between 1980-81 and 1981-82 the number dropped by 15,400 to 93,000, according to the latest figures from the British Council.

### Grant restored

Parents of handicapped children who receive an attendance allowance will no longer lose the benefit when their children are in temporary residential care, Mr Tony Newton, Minister for the Disabled, has announced. The weekly allowance of between £17.50 and £26.25 was previously only paid if a child was at home or in hospital.

Nick Wood meets the crab that could help school biology keep its head above water

## The discrete charm of little *Carcinus maenas*

The humble shore crab could be the answer for school biology departments struggling to maintain expensive stocks of mice and rats.

The idea comes from Dr Peter Hogarth, a biology lecturer at the University of York, who normally keeps around 25 crabs in plastic cake boxes in his laboratory.

He points out that the crabs, *Carcinus maenas* in academic circles, are free, plentiful and cheap and easy to look after in the lab. They can also give children a fascinating insight into the general principles of natural selection and animal behaviour.

Dr Hogarth, a former A level examiner, said that the possibility of using crabs in schools first occurred to him when he was marking the ecology section of A level biology papers and interviewing candidates for places at the university.

"These questions were done badly. A lot of schools don't know what to look for when they send youngsters out on ecology field trips," he said.

His solution is for them to head for the nearest beach - though not one covered in shingle - where by observing and recording the numbers of the crabs and their markings, size and sex, youngsters will gain a picture of evolution in action.

An afternoon's spadework will also pay rich dividends for the school's biology lab, he says. He reckons to have collected as many as 100 crabs in a couple of hours foraging on the

shore, and says that they travel well, provided they are well wrapped in damp seaweed.

Back in the lab, immersed in a few inches of sea water or tap water containing salt, they thrive on a diet of frozen mussels, fish or dried catfood. Unlike tropical fish, their water does not need artificial aeration or circulation. In fact, an airline can be a positive disadvantage because the crabs commonly use it as an escape route.

There they can be used for a variety of experiments which he describes in the current issue of *Journal of Biological Education*. Crabs moult regularly and children can readily record the changing size and patterns of their shells. Observations and recordings

He reckons to have collected as many as 100 crabs in a couple of hours and says they travel well if wrapped in damp seaweed.

can also be made of their characteristic responses to danger and of their foraging habits. He believes they can be used by almost any age group - from primary school up to the sixth form.



## NEWS

# Coventry plan for curriculum could raise leaving age

by Nick Wood

A move which would, in effect, raise the school leaving age to 18 would give children the chance to pursue a range of educational and training opportunities within a comprehensive framework, the British Association for the Advancement of Science annual meeting in Brighton was told.

Mr Alan Sanday, chief inspector for Coventry, read a paper prepared by Mr Bob Aitken, the city's director of education, which sets out the authority's plans for a radical overhaul of the secondary school curriculum.

Mr Aitken argues that from the age of 14 youngsters should be offered a more flexible range of courses. He is particularly keen on ensuring a better deal for two groups - 16-year-olds who want to sample a range of jobs before deciding on a career or going on to further training; and 14-year-olds who feel they are ready for work experience.

Progress depends on jettisoning the traditional two-year subject courses leading to O level and CSE and their replacement by modules - short courses lasting, say, 25 hours, which could stand alone or lead on to further study in the same area.

The Aitken paper said: "From 14 to 18 and beyond, the matching between the wide range of aspirations and the courses required might best be achieved by organizing the curriculum in modules or units rather than subjects."

"For example, the mathematics curriculum might be divided into some units designed to be concerned with



Bob Aitken

the mathematics of everyday life, some units concerned with mathematics requirements for industry and commerce at various levels and some units required as a preparation for more advanced courses.

"At 14, a student might do only the 'everyday life' units but the important feature of the system is that at any stage he could progress by adding further units. In a similar way, other subjects could be formulated as units with a variety of aims and objectives."

A key feature of the plan is the way it cuts across traditional boundaries in schools and further education and, by allowing people the chance to come back to school, opens up the prospect of "comprehensive education for life", Mr Aitken believes.

It also "deinstitutionalizes" education by allowing at least some teaching to move out of the classroom and into other centres better equipped to handle the material involved. But major questions, such as the range of units on offer, their length and methods of assessment, still had to be answered.

A switch to modular learning would also hasten the pace of curriculum change, the meeting heard. By cutting down the length of courses, room could be made for new topics such as work experience, health education and peace studies.

Fourteen-year-olds would not then face the "wholly irrational choice between, say, the whole of economics and the whole of physics".

The Aitken paper added: "An advantage of the proposed modular system is that it would allow a student to achieve a much better balance without offending against the integrity of subjects which quite properly has its advocates. It would probably lead to much tighter teaching since the learning objectives of each module would need to be specified, and it would facilitate change."

As a member of the Rampton, now the Swann, committee on the education of ethnic minority children, he had found numerous examples of misinformed, prejudiced views among white children.

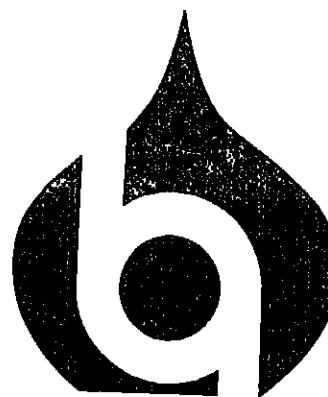
Children did not change when they got older. Countless school visits had confirmed that these youngsters later became the teachers who perpetuated these attitudes.

One head had told Mr Duncan that he did not know how many black children were in his school as he did not notice colour and treated all children alike. Yet within minutes the head had said: "The trouble with West Indians is that they have a ghetto-like mentality."

Mr Duncan added: "Nothing is more inequitable than the well-meant but misguided adoption of the equal treatment for all principle. Pupils are not alike."

Teachers should be aware of their pupils' religious, cultural, racial and linguistic backgrounds. "Ignore this and we leave them behind. The Eurocentric pork will not be a palatable menu for all. Some will starve."

He called for a balanced, more positive approach to the curriculum for all pupils, particularly in all-white schools. "I reject black studies. I reject the Eurocentric curriculum."



British Association at Brighton

## Courses defended

The widely-held idea that vocational training courses such as the Youth Training Scheme trap young people in degrading and dehumanizing jobs came under attack at the meeting.

Mr Chris Hayes, of the Institute in Manpower Studies in London, said that the "skill ownership" approach planned for the YTS, which starts next month, was specifically designed to give young people the ability and confidence to cope with the vagaries of the future. It would help youngsters whether or not they were successful in finding a job.

He said: "Skill ownership describes

what young people should take with them at the end of the youth training year, what they should be able to redeploy in other work, whether within or out of (paid) employment.

"It is based on the competence to use and marshal knowledge and skills and, as a result, to act effectively to achieve a purpose. A person demonstrates skill ownership if he is competent to perform effectively in a real life situation, can find out what he needs to know and be able to do in an unfamiliar situation, and can redeploy his competence to perform effectively in unfamiliar circumstances."

## Why 'work' poses threat to academic timetable

The new subject on the secondary school timetable is "work", and it is set to transform the nature and organization of education, Professor John Eggleston, head of the department of education at the University of Keele, told the meeting.

Academic schooling for most pupils is at risk, he said, citing Swedish research that suggests that a school week made up of three days of work experience and two days of normal lessons would leave academic achievement unimpaired.

Even sixth-forms and colleges of further education might find themselves redundant, he said. The Government is known to have considered proposals to extend the thinking behind the Youth Training Scheme to take in 16-year-olds planning to enter professions such as medicine, law and accountancy.

"Already in a growing number of occupational categories - such as motor vehicle maintenance for boys and shop work for girls - entry has become almost exclusively through Manpower Services Commission schemes and not direct from school. Even the remaining monopoly of 'academic' qualifications - may be threatened by MSC initiatives," he said.

Professor Eggleston explained how political and economic thinking had brought an increasingly vocational curriculum to schools.

The impact of mass unemployment, particularly for the young, and the emergence of increasingly specialized occupations, remote from everyday



John Eggleston

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The impact of mass unemployment, particularly for the young, and the emergence of increasingly specialized occupations, remote from everyday



Unemployment... social values at stake

## View of idle unemployed dismissed

The popular belief that the unemployed are lying in bed all hours, watching television and videos, amusing themselves in pubs, clubs and sports centres and, from time to time, cashing in on the black economy, was roundly dismissed at the meeting.

Two papers, from staff at the Science Policy Research Unit at the University of Sussex, quoted findings showing that for the vast majority on the dole unemployment is a "curse not a liberation from the trials of work."

Mr Ian Miles, reporting the results of interviews with 100 employed and 300 unemployed people in Brighton, said: "Unemployment as it is experienced today remains a miserable and frustrating condition for most of those afflicted."

Professor Marie Jahoda, professor emerita at the university, said: "Not just material losses are involved; the

basic social values on which a civilized society should rest are at stake when millions of people are assigned to the scrap-heap, while others prefer to look in another direction. This danger, it seems to me, makes all talk of liberation futile and stamps mass unemployment as a curse."

Both speakers concentrated on the social penalties of unemployment, which typically halves previously low incomes.

Professor Jahoda based her conclusion on a review of the research on the social and psychological effects of unemployment. This showed that the unemployed feel "depressed, bored and useless" and that their "psychological malaise" was principally the product of being cut off from their friends and colleagues at work rather than a sudden drop in living standards.

Those who coped best with being out of work were those who found other avenues, such as voluntary

work, that met these basic needs. Meanwhile in Mr Miles's survey all those unemployed scored lower than the employed on an index of psychological well-being, but the results showed significant variation.

He said: "Unemployed men maintain a wide range of social contacts, who keep themselves active and involved in social projects or collective purposes, who keep a regular structure in their lives and who feel themselves respected by the world at large report fewer of the negative psychological symptoms associated with unemployment."

Mr Miles also revealed how the jobless spend their time. The average jobless man puts in four hours a day on domestic chores, household repairs and shopping, compared with just one hour by the man at work.

Other studies showed that this malaise was the result of unemployment, not its cause, she said.

But the unemployed were not a "homogeneous group". A few, perhaps as many as one in five, adjusted relatively well to their new situation. Professor Jahoda thought this was because work had a meaning which went beyond the simple message of the weekly pay packet.

Work also exposed people to areas of experience crucial to their psychological well-being: a time structure on the day, contact with people outside the restricted network of family and friends, participation in collective effort, social status, and regular activity.

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## Disruption is becoming a normal part of school life

Disruptive pupils were responsible for 144 serious incidents in one week at a large mixed multi-racial comprehensive, according to a research project, details of which were released to the meeting.

Alarming though this was, the disruption did not take the form of violence or aggression against the teacher, said Dr David Stead, a leading figure in the research.

Dr Stead, senior lecturer at Goldsmith's College, London, said that teachers interviewed after the incidents agreed that the behaviour was often the "reactive response by pupils to what they perceive as the inappropriate, unfair or aggressive behaviour of the teacher initially".

Disruption in this school and another outer London borough comprehensive that he monitored was so widespread as to be a normal feature. At the same time neither school was obviously disorderly and in both there was evidence that most pupils were learning satisfactorily.

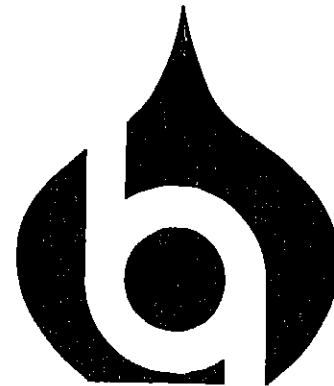
Teachers at the schools described disruptive behaviour as "clustering around, rowdiness, abuse, bad language, talking, chatting and rejecting authority".

Pupils interviewed in the research project complained of unfairness, with only some pupils being punished. Teachers were accused of tending to blame previous troublemakers.

Dr Stead said disruption in schools had been the focus of attention throughout Western Europe and the United States over the past 10 years. But many of the worries were now seen to have been exaggerated.

He quoted ILEA figures which showed that only 1 per cent of the authority's 300,000 pupils may be disruptive and their teachers risk assault once in 85 years.

"It may be," he concluded, "that we



British Association at Brighton

have to get used to the fact that schools today are more disrupted than they were in the past. Or, to put it another way, that comprehensive schools dramatize the problems of behaviour which were the common experience of the elementary and secondary modern schools.

"It is the price that we have to pay for seeking to resolve rather than to ignore differences. The separation which was implicit in the existence of a two-tier system together with separate schools for the handicapped created the illusion that schools could be as free from conflict as the grammar school. They cannot."

"If the only way to create conflict free schools is to separate out discordant elements by a kind of educational apartheid, many may think this is too high a price to pay."

In the meantime, schools might usefully consider the structures which could best contain an optimum or healthy level of disruption, both for the sake of teachers and pupils."

David Lister



## Lifting the lid on low protein lunchboxes

The contents of the average school lunch box have caused dismay to a sociologist and a dietician.

With education authorities cutting back on school dinners and prices rising, far too many children are getting through the day on a diet of sandwiches, crisps and chocolate biscuits, they say.

Fewer than half the 100 youngsters surveyed regularly ate a balanced meal - one including protein, calcium, fruit or vegetables, carbohydrate and fat. One in three always unwrapped a lunch that was "definitely unsatisfactory". The items most commonly omitted were fruit or vegetables and, less often, protein and calcium.

Nutritional factors are often over- ridden by considerations of cost, convenience and a youngster's likes and dislikes, Miss Platt said. These tend to be strongly held and idiosyncratic.

Sweetened yoghurt, crisps and chocolate biscuits topped the popularity poll, with cheese, a widely-used sandwich filling, the least popular.

Typical of the kind of meal that

caused Miss Platt dismay were the contents of one child's lunchbox which bulged with four Marmite sandwiches, a cake, a jam tart, a Mars bar, biscuits, two packets of crisps and an orange drink.

Miss Platt and Miss Jennifer Clark, a dietician with the Brighton health authority, also interviewed about 20 mothers to discover the factors that governed their choice of foods.

Only three said they aimed to provide a "balanced diet" for their children. Most talked in terms of "good" and "bad" foods: the latter meaning items such as sweets and biscuits.

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## NEWS

## Budget too low to stop rot

by Biddy Passmore

The crumbling state of Northern Ireland's secondary schools has been highlighted by the chief officer of one of the province's education and library boards.

Large sums would have to be spent on improved maintenance next year "to avoid controlled and maintained schools in this area rotting away", Mr Bob Hamilton, chief officer of the North-Eastern board, said in a gloomy report on the financial prospects.

He told the board's monthly meeting that making good years of neglect caused by government cuts would absorb the £400,000 the board can expect to receive through the redistribution of funds from Belfast to other parts of Northern Ireland. And

there would be no money for new capital projects, although 16 were ready to go.

Northern Ireland's Department of Education had provisionally allocated the board an increase of only 4 per cent over this year's budget, Mr Hamilton told the meeting. This meant it would have to make a cut of £60,000 in current spending if inflation ran at 6 per cent.

The effect of such cuts would be "drastic in some cases", Mr Hamilton said. Among the bleak options he listed were closing all teachers' centres, cutting out swimming, and slashing capitation and the library and youth services.



Nicholas Scott

## If you want to get ahead... help yourself

Self-help groups for women managers who want to be more effective are being funded by the Manpower Services Commission, under a new two-year programme.

Teachers keen on getting senior jobs and education officers could be eligible to join in the women-only groups, according to Dr Tom Boydell, of Sheffield City Polytechnic, who is developing the project.

Education officers would be eligible to join in the group being set up for women working in local government in Nottinghamshire, Dr Boydell said. "And if we were to get in touch with a group of teachers who have definite

ideas about wanting to be put in managerial positions in schools, then they would certainly be eligible for funds."

News of the programme comes in the wake of a survey showing that the number of women heads and deputy heads in schools in England and Wales is low and dropping (TES, July 29).

Dr Boydell said the MSC would be putting about £31,000 into the project over the next two years. He expected at least five self-development groups to be set up. They would be a mixture of those based on a geographical area, and those based on a specific field such as banking or community work.

## TV team may make film on economy

The makers of the TV series *Yes Minister* could be commissioned by Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary, to make a film for children spelling out the economic facts of life. This is understood to have been one possibility canvassed by Sir Keith during discussions with officials and

HMI on how to make pupils understand the mysteries of the economy before they leave school.

This theme, long a hobby-horse of the Education Secretary, has come to the fore again and Sir Keith has circulated a two-page memo on the subject to senior officials which will be

discussed at a seminar after the summer holidays.

The memo has caused nervousness among some officials, who fear that Sir Keith might try to impose his strong, free-market views from the centre.

## Services schools severely criticized

Low standards in eight primary schools for the children of British Servicemen in Dortmund, West Germany, may get even worse if the high staff turnover continues, says a report by HM Inspectorate.

In a highly critical account of the eight schools, run by the Service Children's Education Authority, the Inspectorate finds much that is wrong both with the curriculum and teaching methods.

Generally the pace of work was too slow, children spent too much time on

repetitive tasks and became isolated. As a result "children's motivation is low and both the quantity and quality of response fall away sharply."

Opportunities for extending basic reading and written work were limited, and most maths teaching was confined to practising basic skills.

The schools themselves thought history and geography were a special problem. These subjects were usually approached through topics, though in one or two schools the topics being tackled during the autumn term did

## Long-term aims praised

by Diane Spencer

Caldwell Hall School, Burton-upon-Trent, has "established itself as a caring community" for maladjusted boys since it started 10 years ago, the inspectorate says in its report.

"Its long-term aims are sound and if the head and his staff continue to develop and refine their procedures in the tradition already established of assessment and monitoring of their total performance, its future should be assured," the report concludes.

Caldwell Hall is one of five independent schools for handicapped pupils run by the Honored Group. When inspected in May last year, the school had 61 boys on roll, placed there by local education authorities.

The school was commended in the report for its wide range of assessment

and record-keeping procedures, and the staff for fulfilling the heavy demands made upon them for completing the various forms. The "treatment plan" drawn up for each child was also praised, although the educational prescriptions should be more specific to be effective, say the inspectors.

Furniture and fittings were deemed very satisfactory and provided a warm and welcoming homely environment; but schoolroom areas were under-equipped and books were in short supply.

Inspectors suggested broadening the scope of art and craft subjects, a more structured approach to the sports programme, a reassessment of the science syllabus, and provision of better facilities and equipment.

## HMI reports

HMI reports are available free of charge from the Department of Education and Science, Publications Despatch Centre, Honeypot Lane, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 1AZ. Also available from I.E.S.s.

not include any history or geography. Music was a great weakness in some of the schools, and drama and expressive movement were almost non-existent. Art and craft work was limited, and the quality of work did not improve as children moved up the school.

The quality of work in these areas was likely to remain poor until staff recognized their importance to the rest of the curriculum, the Inspectorate said.

The most serious obstacle to improving the quality of service children's education was high staff turnover. "If the system cannot persuade more heads to remain for a minimum of five years, and for deputy heads and senior staff to remain for three years, it will experience great difficulty, not only in raising standards, but in maintaining the present level," the report said.

A much closer check needed to be kept on locally employed teachers - their coming and going was "seriously interrupting and disrupting the education of large numbers of Service children." Promotions and transfers during the academic year made the position even worse.



## SCHOOL TO WORK

Wednesday afternoon in Bury St Edmunds, a pleasant and prosperous market town in the west of Suffolk. The sun beats down as the pens of pigs and cattle are despatched at bewildering speed to their new owners — slow-moving men who seem little impressed by the auctioneer's chatter or his attempts to demonstrate the quality of his goods by bringing them to life with a whack on the rump. I try to avoid blinking as six piglets go for £28.

A mile away, Mr John Carnall, the area education officer, swelters in his office, where I join him to hear how Suffolk, a county that missed the first industrial revolution, is being brought face to face with the second and the full panoply of educational adventure which that implies — school/industry links, work experience, classroom technology, vocational training, school and teacher appraisal, curriculum review — the list is endless.

I try to wipe away the memories of miles of ripening corn and the smells of the market. All the same — for both us — it seems an unlikely assignment.

I begin by asking him the local youth unemployment rate. He's not sure, although he's convinced it is below the national average. But he goes on to talk enthusiastically about the business education liaison panels, bringing together teachers and industrialists, that have been set up in each of the county's three areas, about the textbook work experience scheme at Bury St Edmunds' King Edward VI upper school, about the twinning of schools with local firms, and about the appointment of a part-time industrial liaison officer at Great Cornard school, courtesy of the £3,000 grant from the Department of Industry.

Maybe Suffolk isn't so sleepy after all. But there's another strand to my prejudices, fuelled by *An English Journey*, Richard West's penetrating portrait of modern Britain, which marks out the East Anglian region, with its super-efficient agriculture, booming container port of Felixstowe, thriving small and not-so-small firms and flourishing professional classes, as one of the few places in the country to have ducked the recession.

Surely, here at least, far from the despair of the cities, the tradition of academic abstraction can be allowed to linger on?

What figures are immediately available tend to bear out this view. In Stowmarket, home of ICI's paint factory — the biggest in Europe — only 3 in 100 of last year's school-leavers are still looking for work. Mr Carnall hazards that the situation is much the same in the bustling town outside.

One of those grappling with the problems of success is Mrs Meri Thackray, unemployment specialist in the careers office, who is trying to round up youngsters for the area's youth training schemes that get under way next month.

Her worry is that she will not be able to find enough unemployed young people to fill the 1,430 places the Manpower Services Commission has allocated.

"More young people have found work than we thought. A lot are phoning up and saying: 'I won't need a place. I've found a job.'"

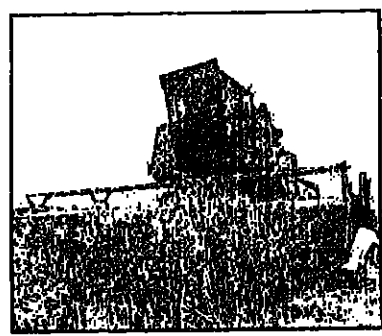
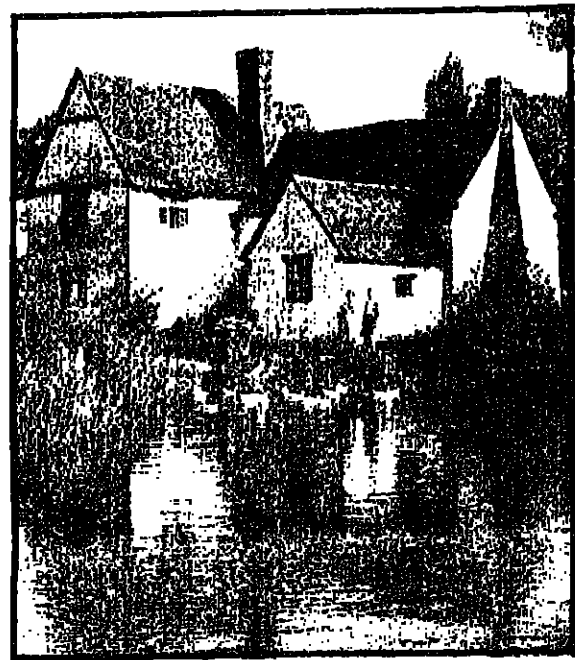
As she goes on to explain, it's a message calculated to drive the big firms, such as Debenhams, who have landed the lucrative managing agencies for the YTS, to distraction. They could be out of pocket if they fail to fill their places.

"I'm sure we will be over-subscribed with YTS places," Mr Carnall adds.

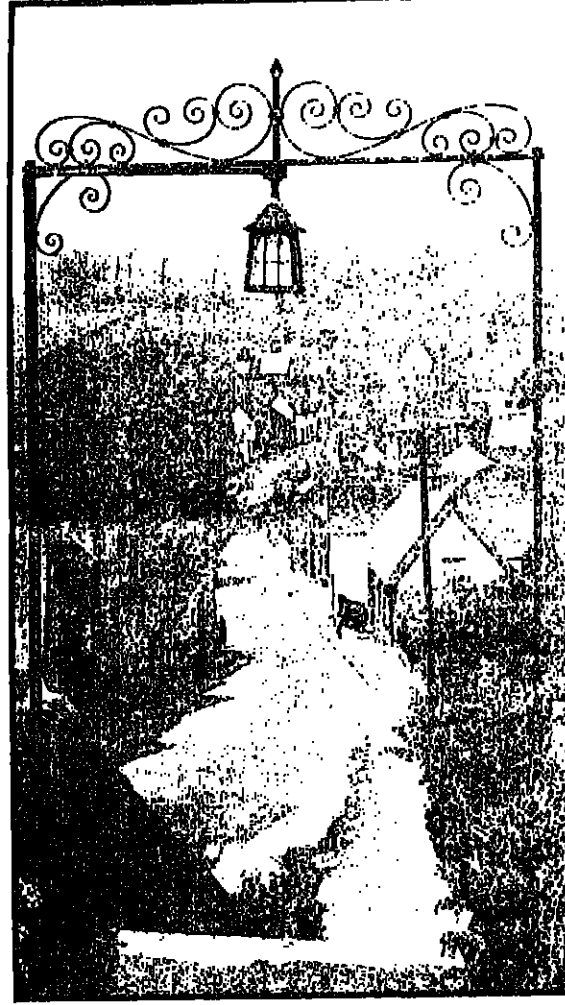
But, as they both point out, the picture is not as rosy as it seems. Many youngsters are hedging their bets and waiting for their exam results before deciding whether to tangle with Norman Tebbit's brainchild or settle for the safer pastures of school.

Others fear that the YTS will be no better than the Youth Opportunities Programme, which has a dismal reputation throughout the country. For them, a job, any job, is likely to seem a better bet. Mrs Thackray wonders how many will be back, knocking on her door, in three months' time.

King Edward VI, a 1,200-pupil 13-to-18 upper school of the type that predominates in the county, is twinned with Mann's, distributors of West German harvesting machinery. Mr Mike Moran, the forthright head, dismisses the notion that links with



Left: Schools have forged links with agriculture, the county's largest industry. Above: Willy Lot's cottage. Right: The picturesque village of Kersey.



Nick Wood travels to Suffolk to find out how schools are helping the children of Constable country prepare for the 21st century

## Sleepy hollow awakes

industry and work experience are a belated, if unsatisfactory, answer to the challenge of joblessness.

"It's mistaken to think work experience is for job sampling and to find employment. That's not the prime purpose at all."

"One of the main aims is the motivation of the youngsters themselves. They find the real world reinforcing what the school has been saying and they come back with increased enthusiasm for school itself."

Irrespective of the merits of his argument, the school's scheme, which places all 350 of the fourth years with some 200 employers for an average of two weeks in the summer term, is splendidly organized.

For a time, the school becomes a job centre as the firms notify their "vacancies" and return job descriptions, the particulars of which are typed out on cards and posted on notice boards. The youngsters are then put through the mill that one day they will face for real — applying for the jobs that interest them and being interviewed by teachers or the employers themselves. Some, inevitably, have to take second or third best.

There is the usual crop of shop assistants, classroom helpers, factory hands, bank clerks and doctors' receptionists plus, naturally enough in Suffolk, farm labourers.

But some of King Edward's 15-year-olds land something out of the ordinary — like one boy, a keen golfer, who became an assistant professional for a week and another, less enviably, who wound up tending the borough council cemetery. He was told to bring a strong pair of boots and a packed lunch.

How, I wonder, has the school found so many employers willing to cooperate?

"It's so important you put out all your youngsters — then you get cooperation," Mr Moran says. "In the past, work experience schemes have had a bad name. If schools are going to put out their problem youngsters — as often happens — then that's a bad public relations. You need to put out people of first class calibre."

Not that it's all been plain sailing. His own "proselytizing" and the commitment of his careers staff — Mrs Lynn Manning, Mr Colin South and Mr Robin Ford — have been needed to overcome the resistance of staff and

parents alike in a school with a 45 per cent staying-on rate and an "academic" tag.

Elsewhere in the county, more evidence of the move towards a more relevant curriculum is put before me. At Orwell High in Felixstowe, a group of sixth-formers from schools throughout Suffolk have come together with representatives from industry to play the Metal Box game — a dauntingly realistic portrayal of the hazards of keeping a fledgling company afloat.

Half a dozen youngsters sit quietly while a buyer for the docks gives a long-winded account of how he came to be a buyer for the docks. They seem happier when they are allowed to go back to the intricacies of pricing policies, lending rates and advertising budgets.

There I meet Mr John Taylor, a science teacher and the embodiment of the school/industry twinning policy that is fast gaining ground throughout the county.

In his case, Argentina's loss has been Suffolk's gain. A former works manager, he came to teaching when his firm wanted to send him to the land of the generals. Since then he's made a specialty out of squirrelling goodies

out of private firms, using the children to despatch and chase a deluge of begging letters.

Back in 1978, when Ipswich Town won the FA Cup, his youngsters produced and sold 2,000 bottles of "Superblue" — a washing up liquid they made themselves from chemicals donated by industry.

The day I met him, fourth-formers were preparing to paint the classrooms. These days, in a low-spend authority, there's nothing unusual in that, but not many schools take self-help to the point of making their own paint.

The class had been to the ICI factory, seen how it was done, then come back to Orwell and put theory into practice.

Further north, in Lowestoft, technology is to the fore. At Kirkley High, Mr Keith Catling, the pioneer of a control technology course, is about to go into business. Despoiling of industry ever producing educational hardware that fits the bill, he is setting up a company to make and market a circuit board he has devised.

And in the splendidly equipped workshops of nearby Benjamin Britten school, youngsters learn about practical problem-solving as they design, make, test and evaluate items as disparate as simple paddle steamers to microprocessor-controlled robotic arms.

"Some of the kids do projects that are outside our experience," Mr Paul Hancock, the head of the craft, design and technology department, says, as he shows me one attempt to build a better mousetrap. "It's amazing how ingenious they can be."

But the schools have had their disappointments too. Kirkley, Benjamin Britten and The Denes High, together with Lowestoft College of Further Education, were earmarked as the birthplace for Suffolk's contribution to the technical and vocational education initiative. The plan was to build on the existing strong links between the schools and the college, then to take in other schools in the area.

The bid failed (perhaps Sir Keith Joseph has been reading Richard West) but some elements survive — notably a City and Guilds 365 course and a course in theatre, leisure and recreation. Both will involve youngsters spending some time in school and some in the college.

Not has Suffolk forgotten its roots. The authority has just launched the Suffolk Farm Project in conjunction with the *East Anglian Daily Times*.

Already 120 junior, middle and secondary schools have forged links with their local farm as part of a scheme intended to give children a greater understanding of the countryside and to strengthen the resources open to schools. The plan envisages youngsters of all ages regularly visiting the farm twinned with their school, using its resources in a variety of subjects and learning about the local environment.

As Mrs June Bowry, the environmental studies adviser, puts it: "Many children grow up with little understanding of the countryside even though agriculture is Suffolk's largest industry with an enormous influence on the county's landscape and wild life."

"It is essential for young people to become fully aware of the rural environment and its significance, and the only way this can be achieved is by direct contact with the people who live and work in the countryside."

Back in Ipswich I meet the man in the vanguard of this assault on Suffolk's image as an educational backwater, content to bask in the sunshine of unlooked-for prosperity. Mr Duncan Graham, the chief education officer, is an ebullient Scot who four years ago quit the tenements of Strathclyde and headed south. Like me, he was prepared to find a "sleepy Suffolk."

"That's what I thought when I came here and to an extent it's true. The natives have an inbuilt tendency to disparage themselves."

But he also found a "high quality teaching force" with the dedication to work well beyond their contracted hours — in marked contrast to the "dispirited and union-minded" souls he had encountered in industrial areas where the final bell was the signal for "Le Mans" getaway from the school car park.

In other respects, he was less encouraged. The curriculum was "outdated" — a monument to the traditions of the nineteenth century — and links with industry took the form of trench warfare with businessmen and teachers hurling swathes of ill-informed abuse at one another.

On such unimpressive ground, he set out to build an engine for change. "If you want to change the curriculum you do it by bringing in outside agencies. . . I believe that unless the curriculum in schools becomes a lot more relevant — both to industry and to the needs of all the pupils — we are just asking for it in terms of seeking more resources."

"It seemed to me that by having links with industry we could reduce some of the hostility which industry undoubtedly has for schools, which is often unsubstantiated, and the slightly insular, efficient but not enormously relevant things we are doing in schools could be sharpened up."

To begin with, the business education liaison panels were more talking shops, charged with bridging the great divide. Now, as I'd seen, they were engaged in practical schemes to bring schools and industry closer together.

He was also quick to scotch the suggestion, fed by my visit to Bury St Edmunds, that Suffolk doesn't have a youth unemployment problem. Last January, 11.6 per cent of the county's 1982 school-leavers were still looking for work and 35 per cent were on government training schemes. In June, combined adult and youth unemployment stood at 10 per cent against a national average of 12.3 per cent.

Compared with the industrial north, the figures are encouraging, but they mask "enormous" differences across the county. In Ipswich, Lowestoft and the "no man's land" of mid-Suffolk centring on Leiston, jobs are hard to come by.

"Overall, the MSC is worried about finding enough YTS places in Suffolk," he says, while conceding that the situation in the west of the county may well be different.

His final refrain is a familiar one. Suffolk is in the third division of educational spending. Understandably, Mr Graham finds it "galling."

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# Mercy in the face of threatened murder



Sri Lankan troops deal with a looter . . . a major problem during last month's riots.

## Schools give inadequate preparation for work, young people claim

OECD

Hilary Willes on an international survey of teenage attitudes.

Young people think schools should do far more to prepare them for their working lives.

They want more practical lessons, and would prefer to leave school for a job, than for higher education.

These views come from a major international survey of the attitudes of young people in the developed world towards education and work.

The study was carried out by the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. It took two and a half years and surveyed evidence from 15 nationalities.

The report points out that the single greatest factor affecting the lives of young people appears to be the decline in their participation in the labour market. Along with this goes the increasing number of 16- to 24-year-olds who do not appear to belong either to the world of work or the world of education.

However, young people do not seem to be radically divorced from society. They demonstrate an emotional distance from political and social institutions, and are primarily concerned with fulfilling their personal needs in their private world of friends and family, but they remain concerned about the environment and nuclear power.

The study also found that: ● while young people of all classes are worried about unemployment, those from poorer backgrounds tend to assume a larger share of the blame; ● although young people clash with adults the arguments are rarely about basic cultural and social values; ● despite all attempts at positive action in schools, it is still working-class youngsters and girls who face the bleakest prospects and the most limited opportunities.

"The single most powerful demand that young people are formulating, implicitly or explicitly, is simply that for adult status, in its most traditional form, and through it for full integration into society alongside their elders," the report says. "The deprivation of social recognition through lack of work (perhaps the most recognizable badge of adulthood) is what is most sorely felt."

Among German youth, 30 per cent say they will do their best to escape work pressure, while 10 per cent say they see no purpose in life. In 1979, 13 per cent of Swedish 15- and 16-year-olds were saying they saw alcohol and drugs as a way of making their lives richer.

Yet there is no evidence that dwindling job opportunities have made young people more defiant and critical. Rather the evidence is that they have come to place more value on such conservative values as economic security.

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Education and Work: the views of the young. OECD, Paris 1983. Available from HMSO.

## OVERSEAS

## SRI LANKA

Stuart Little on relief work by Britons during the recent upheavals

Voluntary Service Overseas workers played a key role in relief programmes for thousands of Tamil refugees during the unrest in Sri Lanka last month. Twelve VSO workers, among them teachers (as reported in *The TES* on August 5), acted as messengers for the estimated 35,000 Tamils, who had fled to refugee camps in Colombo, the capital, after Sinhalese violence against them.

Press reports in the first week of violence said Sinhalese rioters had threatened the lives of hospital and relief workers if they helped injured or homeless Tamils.

Ms Rosie Fieth, VSO field director of programmes in Sri Lanka, organized the messenger service as part of general relief work, undertaken under the direction of the charity organization, Save the Children, and its Norwegian equivalent, Reid Barna.

The authorities in Colombo granted Ms Fieth a pass, which allowed her to move freely during the curfew imposed by the Government, after the

violence against the Tamils broke out on July 23.

The pass was valid for passengers she carried in the VSO minibus. She contacted relief organizations after she and 12 other VSO workers, who were staying at her house bordering on the shanty-town Borella district of Colombo, had discussed how best to help.

Three VSO English teachers had arrived at her house, after leaving their posts at provincial teacher-training colleges at the height of the troubles.

Mr John Palmer, programme management officer responsible for Sri Lanka at VSO's London headquarters, was in daily contact with Ms Fieth.

"Rosie and the teachers organized a reference form, so that they could list the names, addresses and telephone numbers of refugees' relatives in the north and outside of the country," he said.

"The volunteers did the best they could to send on simple messages by letter and by phone from the VSO offices, when they could get through."

The volunteers also helped relief organizations to distribute food and other essential items.

VSO has a total of 35 field workers and teachers in Sri Lanka, involved in English language, technical training, community development and agricultural teaching and advisory projects.

Mr Palmer said all the volunteers were safe and some had returned to their teaching posts.

"We are going ahead as planned with our projects, despite the troubles."

"But we are constantly monitoring the situation and will take appropriate action if violence erupts again," he said.

One VSO EFL teacher, Mr David Hayes, from Norwich, witnessed scenes of devastation in the central provinces as he travelled by bus to Colombo to catch a plane home.

"From Matale, about 20 miles north of Kandy, I saw village after village with smoke still rising from burnt out houses, cars, lorries, huts — literally anything belonging to Tamils had been destroyed."

Mr Hayes, employed on an "English for special purposes" project at the Junior Technical College in Anuradhapura since August 1982, travelled to Colombo with Ms Sabine Gupta, from Bristol, who held an English teaching post at Kandy Polytechnic. Her brother, Ernest, who was staying with her on holiday, travelled with them.

Mr Hayes and Mr Gupta became embroiled in the confusion after riots in the Petta market area of Colombo on July 29, while waiting to meet Ms

Stuart Little is editor of the *EFL Gazette*.

## Promotion for preschool

KENYA

Preschool education in Kenya has been upgraded from being a branch of the welfare services to an official part of the education system.

The Government has transferred control from the Ministry of Culture and Social Service to the Ministry of Basic Education, which should help improve the training of preschool teachers and make curriculum development easier.

An official report shows that only 11 per cent — 407,000 — of the country's 3 to 5-year-olds attend preschool.

Two years ago the Government started a Department of Preschool Education in the Ministry of Basic Education, and a preschool project at the Kenya Institute of Education in Nairobi was charged with developing a curriculum.

But both department and project got entangled in red tape. They could not supervise the implementation of their programmes because in law preschool education was part of the social welfare service for mothers.

Irungu Ndirangu

## Sacrifice to family planning

SWEDEN

Christopher Mosey on the approaching crisis of falling rolls.

The teaching profession in Sweden, already badly hit by public spending cuts, is facing its worst crisis in modern times as a result of the nation's declining birthrate.

This year the Central Bureau of Statistics predicts a fall in the 8.5 million population — the start of a trend which the experts say is likely to continue well into the next decade.

One immediate effect is that by 1988 there will be 100,000 fewer children entering primary school. As a result, 10,000 primary school teaching positions will become vacant.

Sweden's teaching unions, greatly alarmed, have demanded that the primary schools be allowed to keep their present allocation of the national schools' budget, emphasizing that this would make it possible to increase the teacher-pupil ratio and improve the quality of primary education.

An estimated 120 million kronor in teaching salaries will be saved by

ernment of Mr Olof Palme, the Prime Minister, is insisting on the emphasis in education being directed firmly on the 16-18 age bracket, as more children stay on in school rather than join the day queues.



## LETTERS

# Wider in-service courses needed on the value of art galleries

Sir - With reference to Frances Spalding's article, "Learning to see" (TES, August 12), only a passing mention was made of the teacher's role in art gallery-based educational activity, and no reference made to the need for more widespread in-service teacher education in this area.

The success of art gallery workshops with schoolchildren does, obviously, very largely depend on the attitudes and involvement of teachers, and yet gaps in communication which still exist between gallery staff and schoolteachers, are not always being tackled as fundamentally as they might be. (An extensive survey conducted by Helen Luckett, keeper of education at Southampton Art Gallery, to be published in the new year in a special educational edition of *Bulletin* - the journal of the Art Galleries Association - will provide a more accurate picture of the educational provision of art galleries in this country.)

The real value of educational activity in the art gallery lies in the teacher's ability to follow up the experience in the classroom and to utilize the children's responses on future visits, identifying areas of focus for investigation and where appropriate

for curriculum development. While effective and sustained liaison between the gallery and the school is an essential factor in achieving this, it does not necessarily lead to a reciprocal awareness of the situation.

Gaps of understanding on the part of adults concerned are clearly very much to do with a lack of experience on both sides, and considerable advantages could be gained if art gallery educationists and teachers were able, on an observational level at least, to swap roles for agreed periods. As a positive step forward, many galleries have already been appointing experienced teachers to their full-time staff.

A recent DES short course at West Midlands College - "Art appreciation and the educational use of art galleries and museums" - was based on an overview of teachers' needs in this area, aiming to equip them with some of the experience and expertise necessary in carrying their teaching effectively beyond the classroom, and in relating classroom projects to art and design field experience.

What teachers on such retraining courses need most of all, however, is a new stimulus, and the kind of respect and professional support which unfortunately is still lacking for them in some educational resource areas.

CATHERINE FIELDING  
School of Teacher Education  
West Midlands College of Higher Education  
Walsall

## More appreciation

Sir - With reference to Frances Spalding's article, "Learning to see" (TES, August 12), it is a pity that those of us who teach in schools away from progressive art galleries, and who have enormous problems in finding a good range of direct influences for our pupils.

May I suggest the following points for consideration?

● Within galleries, the education officers might well like to hang a "synopsis" collection of paintings, from the permanent, or special, exhibition, in a room where noise is tolerated (the selection of the Courtauld Institute's impressionist collection, hung in that small room in the National was a prime example of a "synopsis").

● The useful experiments, and results, of the progressive galleries might be collated, and circulated, to all galleries and learning centres.

● Art van Pelt, working through the AAs Council, might encourage the regional arts councils to send out their visual arts education officers, with loan material, into schools (this would be on par with the successful regional work in performing arts specialists coming to schools).

● The Arts Council should bring back the excellent small touring exhibitions suitable for school foyers.

● A study should be made of the art appreciation/history syllabuses from the various examination boards, to see the wide range and needs for students, and to try to meet those needs (try the Joint Matriculation Board's "Study of the Visual Arts" to see the marvellous opportunities for education support).

Then maybe we could enforce Matisse's creative operation and double our efforts to develop art appreciation.

NICK JOHNSON  
Teacher of art history  
John Kyrle High School  
Ross-on-Wye  
Herefordshire

## Poly action

Sir - On August 5, you carried a brief abstract of an HMI report on the engineering department at Bristol Polytechnic.

I should first point out that although the report has only just been published, the visit actually took place in the autumn of 1981. This is not the place for a detailed response to the report, although the polytechnic will shortly be making one, but I should like to pick up just two items as an illustration of the sort of points the polytechnic will wish to make.

First, the report criticizes the provision of equipment for the department but omits to mention that it was HMIs themselves who refused to sanction expenditure on capital equipment and so blocked its purchase. Second, on quite a different tack the report says that the polytechnic is doing higher technician work which "could be done

in other Avon colleges". However, given that much of the expensive laboratory equipment needed for such courses is also required for students on engineering degree courses, this criticism of the polytechnic is, to say the very least, open for debate.

Perhaps more importantly, we have made considerable changes since the visit. Management responsibilities within the department have been reorganized and the introduction by the local authority of an early retirement policy has enabled older staff to retire. The problem of the "poor environment" in which the department had been working has been resolved.

Plans to move the engineering department to the main Frenchay campus were caught up in one of the many "freezes" on capital building projects, but permission has now been given by the DES to build the first phase of a

new engineering department building at Frenchay. Indeed, some of the department's students will be housed there from this September.

There is no doubt that the previous environment has affected the recruitment of both staff and students and that the move which will bring the engineering department into close proximity with the departments of science and computer studies and mathematics, as well as providing first class new facilities, will have a considerable impact on the development of engineering at Bristol. You will see therefore that, even though it took so long for the HMI report to filter through, time has not been wasted at Bristol Polytechnic.

C T CHUDLEY  
Assistant Director (Academic)  
Bristol Polytechnic  
Coltham Road Lane  
Frenchay

## Good interviews

Sir - I think that the idea of "pupil interviews" (TES, Talkback, August 5), is an excellent one. However, in view of the recent controversy over the writing of reports and the possible introduction of lengthy pupil profiles I feel that the "pupil interview" could be profitably expanded.

I feel that the pupil should be brought more into the writing of his or her own report by way of a certain amount of self-monitoring, plus a short pupil interview. I would envisage a teacher asking each pupil in the class to leave the first two or three pages of exercise books blank. These pages would then be used, as the term progressed, by the pupil to record the marks for each piece of work, (the teacher would naturally keep a record in the normal way as well). The marks could be kept in both tabular and graphical form.

In this way, the pupil would always be confronted with his or her progress

(or regress) as it occurred throughout the term in an instantly accessible form. I would hope that this would act as a stimulant to harder work during the term, as well as aiding in the drawing up of reports.

This brings me on to the pupil interview stage. In the two or three weeks leading up to the writing of reports, the teacher could interview each child in the class (probably during lesson time while setting the class a general task to be getting on with). The child's own record of marks would form the basis of a discussion as to what should go down on the pupil's report (it could even be written down there and then in front of the pupil). Thus the report could be seen more as an interaction between pupil and teacher, rather than just another "standard" teacher comment.

ANDREW S IAYATT  
8 Ashlands Road  
Harfield  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffs

## Held back

Sir - I write with reference to your front-page article, "Continuing fall in number of women who become heads" (TES, July 29). I hope that the Women's National Commission is able to persuade Sir Keith Joseph to do something about this, but I am sure that changing the attitudes of selection panels is an almost impossible task, as so much prejudice against women on their part is unconscious and unrecognized, the fruit of centuries of conditioning, and is often fully denied when the question is raised.

It is very difficult to prove discrimination on sexual grounds in an industrial tribunal, even with the able help and backing of the Equal Opportunities Commission, as I know from personal experience. No matter how able and well-qualified a candidate is, there is always some pseudo-valid reason to reject him or her for a headship.

One factor which I think could be

changed with advantage all round is the present policy of awarding headships to very young candidates. I would argue that a 10-year stint in a headship probably sees a candidate's best efforts expended, and all too often the remaining 10 to 20 years of service is spent marking time while the school stagnates.

The age of 45 is early enough for a headship; if Mrs Thatcher in her mid-fifties can cope with the strains of being Prime Minister, an energetic and enthusiastic 50-year-old is able to take on a headship.

Many of us who have reared a family do not really get back into the promotion race until our late thirties, and by then there are several things on the ladder to climb before getting near the top.

HILDA MOORHOUSE  
2 Grove Crescent  
Adlington  
Chorley  
Lancs

## On guard ...

Sir - Aexgrinder (TES, August 5) writes of "a child enthusing about seashore fauna" only to be "quickly silenced by a companion: 'Shh! ... or we'll have to write about it tonight'".

It is not only children who have to be on their guard against such opportunistic manipulation of their enthusiasms. I know of a school not a thousand miles from where I live and

teach, in which even senior staff are becoming increasingly wary about voicing the most tentative of ideas lest they be promptly asked either to prepare a paper or to convene a study-group. Out of the mouths of babes ...

MICHAEL J SMITH  
15 Golden Hind Park  
Dibden Purdie  
Southampton

## Advice sought

Sir - The letters (TES, August 12) attacking agency aunts in general, and Angela Willans in particular, have missed the point. The reason agency aunts have become so influential is the enormous demand for information, advice and help about emotional and sexual problems, which more conventional agencies (family, church, and health services) have been unable to provide.

In Family Planning Association courses on personal relationships and sexuality, for teachers, social workers, nurses and doctors, we find that these groups do not feel competent or confident enough in dealing with the emotional and sexual problems they encounter.

The need for more training in inter-personal skills, particularly in the medical professions, is now widely recognized. In the meantime let us not attack the agency aunts who are revealing the widespread need for help and responding with informed advice.

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Letters for publication should be kept as brief as possible and typed on one side of the paper only. The Editor reserves the right to cut or amend them.

## Punish by numbers

DAVID KIBBLE

As societies in miniature schools mirror their larger counterparts by encouraging certain types of behaviour and by having sanctions to be used against those who fail to conform to certain standards.

With the probable demise of corporal punishment we need more than ever to have at our fingertips a range of punitive measures to use in schools. As one whose job at present involves dealing with disciplinary measures I set my mind to devise as wide a range of punishments as I could.

I used ideas from the British judicial system and also from the armed services, including that of allocating each punishment a number. This allocation of numbers to specific punishments makes for easy record keeping; one can record pupils' punishments on card index cards. Indeed, with more serious offences I formally record it on a pupil's card in their presence, often to great effect.

At present the numbered punishments are: 1 Referral to the local education authority panel who consider whether the pupil should continue his education elsewhere (normally an exclusion or reporting centre); 2 Suspension;

3 A severe reprimand. This is one whose origin is with the services. It involves, after "trying" the case, the reading out of a text from a card as follows: "As your head of house I now issue you with a severe reprimand for (name of offence). This will be entered on your record and I reserve the right to mention both the reprimand and the offence on any report or reference required for you. Do you understand the nature of this punishment?"

I use this punishment only with the fifth form and will award it only once to any one pupil. I explain to the form

the nature of this particular punishment at the beginning of the fifth year and use it only for repeated, serious offences. I regard it as one of the worst punishments I can give. Given in a quiet, formal way it can prove very effective: one of my present recalcitrant fifth-formers left my office complaining that I should not be able to "do that sort of thing". The less it is used the more effective it becomes.

The other numbered punishments are:

- 4 Withdrawal from lessons;
- 5 Informing parents either by telephone or by letter;
- 6 Cancelling a pupil's status as a prefect;
- 7 Daily report (in addition to this, where a pupil has a report signed by subject tutors each lesson and brings it to me at the end of each day, we also have 7A where a pupil reports to me three times in the day; any poor report automatically results in immediate detention);
- 8 Detention;
- 9 Withdrawal at break and lunchtime;
- 10 Repairs (graffiti, etc.);
- 11 Work at home;
- 12 Reasons in writing;
- 13 Suspended report.

Punishment number 12 is another culled from the services: in school I use it only with fifth form prefects.



They are required to submit a short written report on a misdemeanour; it is not used for major offences and on being given the punishment a second or subsequent time they can lose their status as a prefect.

Number 13 derives from our judicial system: a pupil's name is placed on a list in the staff room for a fortnight; one complaint about a pupil's behaviour or work in lessons means that he goes immediately on to punishment 7, full report.

The advantage of such a varied system of varied punishments is that there are a number of punishments "at the lower end" that can be used to check progression any further. Much of the value derives from their symbolic nature - they show that the matter has been brought before a head of house, that he has taken action and that the school disapproves.

Some schools have possibly placed too much weight on the detention system, which can become overcrowded and therefore lose its value and effectiveness. I can almost become a reward. I offer my ideas outlined above in the hope that it may spark off further ideas; for one would be delighted to hear of such.

David Kibble is acting head of house at Lawnswood School, Leeds.

## Super sixth

MALCOLM JOHNSTON  
TIM KEAM  
AND MARY TICEHURST

A good deal has been written about the subsidized movement of pupils from maintained to fee-paying schools, less about the increasing number of sixth-formers who transfer from private education. We thought it would be interesting to look more closely at the reasons behind their decision, and the opinions of students who have experienced the change. At Broadcote Sixth Form Centre, 30 such students responded to a questionnaire.

Before they came to Broadcote 24 of the 30 students were at single-sex schools; 10 boarded, 10 were day pupils at boarding-schools, 10 were at day schools; 23 students felt that they had had no social life outside school; 10 students had felt that they belonged to an "elite" when off school premises.

"It was a very safe place. Everybody knew each other," said one. "At my old school every part of your day was geared to passing an ultimate exam. If you didn't work you just got totally bored because there wasn't anything else to do."

In the case of 12 students, the former school either had no sixth form or was closing; fees were a consideration for nine; the cost and time of travel to and from school affected nine (10 students travelled approximately 25 miles each way and 14 experienced an approximately 10 hour school day door-to-door); 16 students took the decision alone, nine shared it with parents; for 24 students the end of the fifth year seemed a natural break; 18 had friends also leaving the former school; 21 already knew students at the sixth form centre and 16 transferred with friends.

The smallness of their former

school and the security and sense of belonging this afforded appealed to half these students; 10 had liked the sense of discipline/control; for eight, extra-curricular activities had been better; 11 students had been glad to leave the strictness/pettiness of the former school; eight had disliked the lack of freedom. At Broadcote, 11 students liked the friendliness, eight the sense of individual responsibility, six the opportunity to meet new people. Comments included:

"An independent school provides much more incentive to work because one is pressured to do so. Also the high fees make one feel guilty about not doing so. In addition, there is incentive to work so as to keep ahead of one's friends."

"Although the final decision about studying is up to the individual, many don't try hard enough unless they are pushed."

"At my last school I felt I had to work hard because my parents kept on saying how disappointed they would be if I failed my O levels. Now I'm at the sixth form I'm working because I want to get on in life and go off to university."

"I feel much more relaxed and enthusiastic. At my old school you were ordered to finish the work. At Broadcote you are asked. Subtle but much nicer."

"In the lessons the atmosphere is more friendly. You can express your views without worrying."

"There is a more informal working environment, with desks arranged in such a way as to make discussion easier. Before, classrooms were regimentally arranged, even for sixth formers, encouraging a dictatorial attitude in teachers and passivity in pupils."

"I like the mixture of O and A level students, with no distinction made or felt."

On academic progress, 12 students felt that they were working better at Broadcote because they are doing it for themselves, not under threat of punishment; 14 were finding it harder to work, for the same reason. Less work was now done at home by 22 students, because they had free periods in school time. Ten students did not expect to achieve

their potential at the sixth form centre, but 13 did.

They commented: "Having been made to work, the freedom of the sixth form has made me relax too much. I think that if I'd gone to another private school I would have done better but not enjoyed myself so much."

"I spend much more of my time socializing, whereas previously during the evening I did nothing but work and watch TV because there was nothing else to do. The free lessons tend to leave you so relaxed that you find it difficult to get back into proper lessons."

"In the first two terms at Broadcote I tended to abuse the freedom but now I work because I want to, not because I have to."

"I feel that at one stage my attitude to work slackened and now I have to tighten up to continue."

"I expect to have the best of me brought out and put to its full use to recognize it myself and play a considerable part, co-operating, to discover and use that potential."

The two extremes of opinion were represented by the following:

"Although commuting to and from school was not easy at times it was well worth it. I go the sixth form to work because I want A levels. I don't go for the fun of it and will leave as soon as possible."

"I like the different types of people, having been with only middle-upper class girls for most of my school life. The staff are more friendly and really seem to care about you as a person whereas in my old school you were, surprisingly enough, a nobody. Coming to the sixth form has, I feel, made me into a better person, because at a private school you tend to feel apart from the real world. It would have been an awful shock going straight from my old school to a job or university. Sixth form seems to soften the blow a bit, cases you into the outside world."

Malcolm Johnston and Tim Keam are students and Mary Ticehurst is head of sixth form at Broadcote School, Sixth Form Centre, Westonsuper-Mare.

## Sensitive issues

MICHAEL FARRELL

Visiting speakers were the main ingredient of an unusual English and liberal studies course at Red Hill School, Kent, a special school catering for adolescent boys of above average intelligence with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The course group comprised 15 young men aged 16 to 17 years who were allowed to suggest speakers and topics. At first, the boys seemed suspicious of their freedom to choose but soon requests for speakers began to flow.

Over the year we entertained a wide range of guests, from a Jesuit priest to a self-made businessman, from a marathon runner to a forensic scientist. A Member of Parliament, a psychiatrist, a gunsmith and an authority on race relations were among the many others who contributed.

Sessions lasted 70 minutes and we asked speakers to spend about 20 minutes on the talk (or demonstration or film) to allow plenty of time for questions.

Pupils were encouraged to pursue their interests. They would often approach the speaker, after sessions, for addresses or literature or to request an outside visit.

The educational benefits of the course were considerable. The young men gained authoritative factual information and informed opinion on a vast span of topics. They developed their vocabulary, employing new words with initial embarrassment and deference but with subsequent confidence.

Skills in questioning were honed. Our teenagers were soon able to avoid being thrown off by a response like: "What an interesting point. But let me try to clarify it by putting it another way."

Speakers usually enjoyed the rigour

and penetration of the interrogations. Group members became increasingly able to seize upon essentials in the preliminary talk and developed sound debating skills.

All the speakers were briefed about the handicap for which the school provided. They were asked to be particularly sensitive to apparently objective questions that might conceal strong personal elements.

Within this context, pupils used visitors in various ways to fulfil emotional needs. Of many examples that could be given, the case of Nicholas is typical.

This bright 17-year-old wanted to join the police force like his father. But he had been cautioned for committing a couple of minor thefts.

With our police visitor, he expressed anger and suspicion towards the constabulary. The speaker responded skilfully and sensitively. Nicholas then progressed to cautious questioning.

What were his chances of joining the force having been in "a bit of bother"? The response was frank and accurate. He would have to hold down another job, without getting into further trouble, for three or four years before he would stand a chance.

All this highlighted the boy's ambivalence towards his father and his rejection of his father's values by stealing. It illuminated Nicholas's self imposed "double bind", unrealistically desiring to join the police immediately on leaving school.

In confronting our visitor in a way he was probably unable to do with his own father, Nicholas began to unravel his confusion. He found, emotionally and objectively, a good compromise. At the end of the year, the course received the unanimous appreciation of the pupils. Numerous (sometimes surprised) letters of thanks from speakers accumulated.

Apart from the important educational and emotional threads of the programme, such accolades formed a fitting stamp of approval for our rather unorthodox approach.

Michael Farrell is now deputy head of a school for autistic children in London.

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## REVIEW

## The Irish Fact

Timothy O'Keeffe on studies of Joyce, Yeats and their literary progeny



A Colder Eye: The Modern Irish Writers. By Hugh Kenner. Allen Lane £14.95. 0 7139 1595 1. Modern Irish Short Stories. Edited by Ben Fokner. Futura £4.95. 0 7088 2303 3. The Heat of the Sun. By Sean O'Faolain. Penguin £3.25. 0 1400 5722 6.

Hugh Kenner's early critical writings, though textually exact and searching, suffered from appearing to call as much attention to the brilliance of the critic as to the originality of his chosen authors. His later work is, blessedly, more relaxed. In the past, for example, he might have made much heavier weather of his observation that W B Yeats "borrowed" from the prosody of Abraham Cowley ("of all poets") with brilliant success; here it is a passing felicity only. One breathes more easily as a result.

Professor Kenner's subject is The Modern Irish Writers, principally Yeats and Joyce, with forays into the territories of John Millington Synge, Sean O'Casey, Samuel Beckett, Brian O'Nolan ("Flann O'Brien" et al.). Patrick Kavanagh and so on. He says, "It is not true that what I do not discuss I dismiss". In accounting for not writing at length of Thomas Kinsella, John Montague, Seamus

Heaney, George Moore, James Stephens, Lady Gregory, the last three for being "part of a different story", while the first three are "a new story entirely, the story of post-Yeatsian Ireland". One writer, not mentioned in the index, both praised and denigrated by Yeats, and living today at the age of 81 to be very much a part of "a new story" is Francis Stuart. For shame!

Professor Kenner gives a preliminary warning about the snares sometimes involved in what he calls the Irish Fact. What may have been passed down as Gospel Truth can sometimes be revealed as invention, mystification, falsification committed by Irish people commonly with the intention to impress, baffle or lead astray foreign (mostly American) researchers into arcane literary matters. The late Brian O'Nolan was one of the past masters of the art. One trusts that Kenner is not unduly gleeful in pointing out a few major errors in Richard Ellmann's large biography of Joyce: it may be remembered that he drew attention to such errors in a TLS correspondence earlier this year. Rivalry in Joycean matters knows no bounds.

Both Yeats and Joyce were masters of malice, among other things. Joyce's portrait of the young Oliver St John Gogarty as Buck Mulligan in *Ulysses* must have poisoned the rest of his life (towards its end, in a New York bar, he began telling one of his well-smoothed anecdotes about the great figures he had known in Dublin earlier in the century when his words were drowned by great blasts from the juke box; Joyce might have foreseen that kind of fate for him). Yeats tended to the Olympian, though he had sharp claws as well. Kenner quotes him on the novelist, George Moore, who "said to a friend: 'How do you keep your punts from falling about your knees?' 'O', said the friend, 'I put my braces through the little tapes that are sewn there for the purpose'. A few days later he thanked the friend with emotion." Ah well...

Patrick Kavanagh suppressed a poem about Yeats, which ends:

Yes, Yeats, it was damn easy for you protected  
By the middle classes and the Big Houses  
To talk about the sixty-year old public  
protected

Man sheltered by the dim Victorian  
Muses.

Readers of Joyce's letters (among other things, too, he must be ranked as literature's great knickers fetishist, just as Jean Genet

ranked as the connoisseur of policemen's unisex-scented serge crotches) soon realize that there was nothing "dim" or "Victorian" about him. It was a merciless life but a heroic and eventually, I think, a most moving one. Any way he turned it into a myth which even the detractors of someone like Brian O'Nolan has not yet destroyed.

I do not think that Professor Kenner has quite come to terms yet with Brian O'Nolan, master of endless pseudonyms, of which Flann O'Brien and Myles na Gopaleen (later "na Gopaleen") are the most famous. At *Swim-two-Birds* and *The Third Policeman* are comic masterpieces, underpinned though they are by dark broodings and speculations. His Irish novel, *An Béal Bocht*, translated as *The Poor Mouth*, is the blackest of all Green fiction. Kenner underestimates *The Hard Life* - the author considered it to be a study of Dublin dialect but it is far more than that. In my experience he is the writer whose prose, besides that of Evelyn Waugh, has insinuated itself onto more tongues than any other of the last, say, 40 years: people can actually quote him, and take delight in doing so. Can one quote a line from Norman Mailer, John Fowles...

Professor Kenner has a chapter about Irish and his inability so far to learn the language. Here is what Brian O'Nolan wrote on that subject (he was a native speaker): "True Irish prose has a stately latinistic line that does not exist in the fragmented English patois". He goes on to quote his own literal translation of a ferocious and restrained letter by one seventeenth-century Irish captain to another and comments "That seems to me to be an exceptional achievement in the sphere of written nastiness and the original exudes the charm attaching to all instances of complete precision in the use of words". If Joyce hadn't rejected all forms of Irish nationalism, language included, what steeper latinity might he not have brought to it?

Professor Kenner makes much of Joyce's instancing of the difference between England and Ireland when Stephen Dedalus in the *Portrait of the Artist* wonders how differently the English words Home, Christ, Aie, Master echo in the Irish mind. Patrick Kavanagh angrily denounced the enforced teaching of Irish in schools, though he conceded that children should acquire an understanding of the (often beautiful) meanings of place names. He himself, at one time dismissed as the "peasant poet", came from Mucker, "place



of pigs". He bore his fate with equanimity. Meeting him was like meeting a force of nature and he (wrongly perhaps) became a totem figure to many of the dissatisfied but talented younger generation of poets, singing also to find their way beyond Yeats. Heaney has written of his liberating influence though John Montague thought his own generation had been liberated into ignorance, a remark I think he came to regret.

Published at the same time as Kenner's studies and truffle-huntings among the great living and dead of Irish writers are two volumes of reprinted short stories. Ben Fokner's *Modern Irish Short Stories*, a good anthology. When I saw that Anthony Burgess had contributed a Preface I wondered who he would first use the "I", since he is terribly fond of it. It occurs here on the fourth line. Penguin are producing the *Collected Stories of Sean O'Faolain*, of which *The Heat of the Sun* is the second of three volumes. Professor Kenner does not have much time for him or for his contemporary, Frank O'Connor, whom Mr Kavanagh wrote: "How often I read him I wish that the author could have thrown in a few spadefuls of the earth's healthy reality - roots, stones, worms, dung. In the patch intelligence could grow." That is the criticism that really matters, that of the fellow artist.

## A debunking oeuvre

Aina Taylor on an erudite Italian fabulist



Moral Tales. By Giacomo Leopardi. Translated by Patrick Creagh. Carcanet £9.95. 0 85635 420 1.

The jacket of this book claims that "Leopardi is Italy's greatest writer after Dante". Maybe, I confess that I admire the courage to pronounce so boldly, consigning Petrarch and the many towering literary figures of the intervening years to an indeterminate, nebulous limbo. But I do agree where erudition is concerned.

Giacomo Leopardi was born in Recanati in

1798 to a family of impoverished provincial aristocrats. His father, Monaldo, also a man of letters, suffered from the kind of reactionary fanaticism which unhappily animates so many politicians to this day. Anxious to spend most of his time in the pursuit of his studies, he was happy to leave the management of his household to his autocratic and bigoted wife. The education of Giacomo and his siblings, Carlo and Paolina, was entrusted to a private tutor of no great distinction, who was unable to cater to Leopardi's voracious intellectual appetite. From an extremely early age, then, taking advantage of his father's heterogeneous library, the boy taught himself English, German, Spanish, Greek, Hebrew, philosophy, philology, archaeology and astronomy, complementing the Latin and French lessons considered at the time normal and adequate fare for a young gentleman. Endowed with exceptional intelligence and retentive memory, in the space of a few years Leopardi had become one of the most learned men in Europe.

For a proper appreciation of his work, however, it is important to bear in mind the stifling, illiberal atmosphere of his parental home, the mood that informed Italy at that peculiar time in her history, the fragility of his health and the deformity which disfigured him, precluding time and again the emotional fulfilment for which he yearned. All these factors are central to his writing.

Recanati, now in the Marche, was then in the Papal States, a region where every form of artistic expression must conform to the strictest political conservatism. Leopardi, a radical and not conventionally religious, couldn't wait to break free from the cocoon and enjoy the stimulus provided by intercourse with fellow writers. But frequent illness and total lack of financial resources made it impossible for him to leave home before his twenty-fourth year, and even then he never got beyond Naples, Rome, Bologna, Milan, Florence and Pisa, unlike most of his more fortunate contemporaries. Leopardi is best known as a poet, but the controversy begun by his illustrious friend, De Sanctis, and later taken up by innumerable critics, as to whether he is a philosopher, philologist and grammarian, or artist, has not yet come to rest.

Having written his "idylls" and *canzoni*, and tirelessly recorded both thoughts and feelings in his *Zibaldone*, Leopardi began to turn over in his mind the form he intended to give to the *Operette morali*. He wanted to compose, as he wrote to his admiring friend Giordani, "dialogues in the manner of Lucian... short comedies or comedy scenes". His satirical prose, evolved out of his knowledge of Greek and the numerous modern languages he knew, would serve as a novel tool for introducing clarity of style and originality of judgment to Italy at a time of petulant purism and turgid romanticism. Irked by the Absolutists' conviction that man is perfectible and must ultimately achieve happiness, either in this life or the supposed next, and that technological progress will ensure future delights (such as the threat of nuclear war, for example), Leopardi set about his debunking oeuvre with scientific lucidity.

The *Operette*, written at different times and only later published in one volume, do not succeed one another logically, but rather reflect the author's mood at the time each was conceived. Although De Sanctis's criticism (neither properly understood nor admitted) the *Operette* is still held to represent the most sound foundation for later thought, twentieth-century criticism, with the exception of Croce, perceives more or less unanimously the rhythm prevail over philology and philosophy, a work in which literary language must be enjoyed without prejudice. Manzoni, whose writing was so different, acclaimed it as one of the best examples of contemporary prose.

Patrick Creagh has produced an imaginative and accomplished translation, intelligently faithful to Leopardi's idiosyncratic phrasing and punctuation, and garnished with an extensive introduction and notes. The book is elegantly designed and printed, with the exception of a startling misprint on page 11, where 1892, instead of 1829, precipitates the frail poet, who died young, into decrepitude. This is the first of a five volume edition of the *Zibaldone*, and *Epistolario* as well as some of the minor works.

One wonders why the less known *Operette* was chosen to begin the series. According to De Sanctis, critic and friend, Leopardi is a philosopher poet, and must be studied first in his prose, where his philosophy is simply made manifest. This criterion may have governed the choice. But he that as it may, one looks forward with anticipation to an undertaking of scholarly excellence which will give pleasure to mentors and pupils alike.

## Fickle figures

Finlay J Macdonald on the approach of yet more radio trash

For the last couple of weeks "Reithian principles" have been milled over in the BBC's corridors of middle power by men and women who hadn't even been born when the architect of public service broadcasting began his lingering farewell to Portland Place in 1938. It's nothing new. The "Reithian principles" are taken off the high shelves and dusted every time change threatens Radio 4 UK as it is called to distinguish it from its country stepsons, Radio Scotland and Radio Wales.

Five months ago it was Richard Francis, the Managing Director of Radio, who caused a stiahe when he suggested giving Radio 4 a new image as a news and current affairs channel. The idea was courageously challenged in public by Monica Sims who was then nearing the end of her distinguished stint as Radio 4's Controller. The Francis plan was quietly dropped. But no sooner had Monica Sims moved on to become Director of Programmes than her successor, David Hatch, floated a new scheme to boost Radio 4's listening figures which have suffered, inevitably, from the onslaught of the two breakfast television programmes. It is the Hatch "discussion document" which is currently furrowing brows at BBC headquarters and being given the Reithian litmus test by those who remember how to administer it.

Anyone attempting to change an established broadcasting channel will do so in the light of his own predilections and experiences. Richard Francis is an eminent current affairs man; he came to his present post from that of BBC's Director of News and Current Affairs. It was natural that he should see regular injections of news as a tonic for a tired channel. Hatch is differently influenced. He came from Radio 2 which has been having its nose bloodied by LBC's brash, Americanized, rolling magazine format that gets the morning adrenalin pumping with a super-charged concoction of national news, local traffic jams, promising quest for quality which Radio 4 used to boast it had inherited from Reith's old Home Service is only desirable after dark. The morning listener, no less than the evening one, deserves the retention of what Frances Hill in these columns called "traditional civilized values" rather than the sacrifice of them in a helter-skelter after fickle figures.

The *Today* programme achieves a peak of between one million and one

and a half million listeners about 8am and thereafter the audience dwindles to 300,000 till midday when the revamped *You and Yours* hoists it to 750,000. It surges over the million mark again for *The World at One*, and at 2 o'clock 600,000 loyal adherents settle down to the unfailingly excellent *Woman's Hour*. Meantime, on the other side of the broadcasting world, the whole perplexity of popular channels (BBC and commercial) manage to hold sizable audiences during Radio 4's late morning doldrums although they all suffer a dip after breakfast.

Almost any projected solution can be justified from that kind of audience analysis. Richard Francis can point to the pulling power of news and comment in the early morning and at 1 o'clock. David Hatch can argue that modified versions of the present programmes, spiced with popular music, would wean some less committed listeners from Jimmy Young and LBC and the rest till *The World at One* (advanced to 12.30) took the strain. I suspect that Monica Sims might fight for the present mixed programme format (albeit sharpened one way or another) on the sensible grounds that there is a deserving audience which wants a channel with widely varied programmes of quality. Whether or not that is the Sims philosophy it certainly comes closest to those "Reithian principles".

The battle for the ratings is concentrated on the morning period for the simple reason that even prestigious night-time programmes like *Kaleidoscope* and *The World Tonight* have been forced to accept the reality of audiences hovering around 300,000; consequently the changes proposed in the Hatch plan for the evening are such as are unlikely to disturb their devotees. But a channel like Radio 4 derives its character from its whole rather than from its parts, and it would be wrong to assume that quality which promises quest for quality which Radio 4 used to boast it had inherited from Reith's old Home Service is only desirable after dark. The morning listener, no less than the evening one, deserves the retention of what Frances Hill in these columns called "traditional civilized values" rather than the sacrifice of them in a helter-skelter after fickle figures.

## ARTS



Julian Opie: 'Trouble at Work'

## Easy pieces

The Sculpture Show.  
Hayward and Serpentine Galleries  
until October 9.

As you approach the Hayward Gallery across Hungerford Bridge, the sight of Sarah Brudpiece's squat pink missile, "Monument", struggling to rise up above the roofs and terraces is not very encouraging but retrospectively it appears to have been intended as something of a take-off for a show that is as much a fun-fair as a gallery for current British sculpture. There are so many materials, methods and images employed in pieces that pop up in the most unexpected places that as you leave to make your way to Kensington Gardens even Big Ben, sheathed in polythene and topped with a scaffolding platform, seems part of the exhibition.

At the Serpentine Gallery, Kevin Atherton's three bronze deckchairs stand outside, protected from use by a notice that asks us to look, touch but not climb, while nearby, as if in obedience to this request, Hilary Cartmel's sawn and pegged "Woman under the Sun" sprawls on the grass, a lobster-pink crustacean creature apparently unperturbed

by Andy Frost's exploding camel only a few yards from her head. Much of the show is good British fun, but amounting to what? If the weight of the imaginative idea behind a piece of sculpture were what kept it fixed to the ground, several of these pieces would have blown away in the first summer breeze. A few pieces hardly qualify as sculpture at all. Apart from work by Audio Arts that relies on tapes and words, there are Boyd Webb's photographic assemblages and Gerard de Thame's artificially illuminated optical illusion after Caravaggio's "David and Goliath". Stephen Willits has gained a reputation for his ability to give expression to the subculture of housing-estate life including, as here, those sometimes acted-upon fantasies that permit temporary escape from an otherwise frustrating existence, but the pictorialism of his work so overwhelms the three-dimensional interest the calling the piece an installation, as that catalogue does, seems no more than an expedient for anything goes.

Wherever you look, in or outside the Hayward and Serpentine galleries, the evidence of a change of heart is overwhelming. The days of self-contained, clear-out constructions in painted steel have past; the nearest items being Yoko Terauchi's brightly-coloured decorative pieces, and even they are made from torn or plaited paper. Stone is still used but it is more likely to come in inscribed slabs, like Ian Hamilton Finlay's "The Present Order is The Disorder of The Future", or float up the walls in rippled clouds, like Stephen Cox's "Ecstasy". Instead of "truth to materials" or Formalist purity, we have a cornucopia of commercially-produced plastic insects.

The hint of Surrealism this suggests is widespread throughout the exhibition, as is that of Dada, but with Bill Woodrow, one of the already established younger sculptors, these influences are given a contemporary twist in work that has the immediacy of punk. Where some seem content to merely entertain, he ties together with videotape worn and torn synthetic furniture, a washing-machine turned projector and a collaged screen into a violent image of "Life on Earth".

Michael Clarke

## 1965 and all that

A Patriot For Me.  
Theatre Royal, Haymarket.  
Macbeth.  
RSC: Barbican Theatre.

The revival of John Osborne's *A Patriot For Me* is a reminder of how far we have come since 1965. Then (together with Wedekind's *Spring Awakening*, first performed 1906) it was refused a public licence by the Lord Chamberlain as a danger to public morals. The Royal Court Theatre, George Devine leading the outright challenge to theatrical censorship, turned itself into a "club" and so presented the banned play "privately". Club "members" had the excitement of seeing the premiere of Osborne's newest play, one which dealt fairly and frankly with homosexuality (a forbidden subject), and seeing Maximilian Schell make his London debut. It was a good production, well acted (especially by Devine in full drag, looking the spit image of Queen Mary) and deserved its Evening Standard Drama Award despite its didacticism and its length.

These qualities, unspiced now by the illicit excitement of the premiere, make *A Patriot For Me* highly going. In three acts of twenty three scenes, we follow painstakingly

ly Alfred Redl from military cadet to colonel in the elite Imperial Austrian Army. In charge of espionage, he is blackmailed as a homosexual and becomes a double agent for the Russians. Discovered, he is ordered to shoot himself to prevent a scandal. Each scene is well-constructed and interesting in itself (particularly in Act 1). Alan Bates is electrically edgy and powerfully contained all through; David King (Von Mohl) a model of military punctilio and camaraderie; Harry Andrews a glowering embodiment of privilege; Michael Gough a glittering, wise old queen.

But it is far too long. For all Carl Toms's clever designs, a back-projected screen to save time, Ronald Eyre's direction indulges author and actors at the expense of the audience's interest. Nine of Act two's scenes are too many to establish Redl's unwilling acceptance of his homosexuality; Act 2's celebrated bedroom scene is an animated textbook discussion of pathos, no more, and could be trimmed; the lecture, the hospital ward and the Dresden hotel room might all be cut. For *A Patriot For Me* is one of Osborne's best plays, marking an advance in playwrighting technique (abandoning the extended

monologue) and demonstrating an unexpected sympathy. That we have moved on since 1965, and some of the play's preoccupations now seem old hat, does not detract from its importance: a worthy revival.

Bad acting and foolish direction well-nigh destroys the new RSC *Macbeth*. Bob Peck (a medium range actor over-cast) pops his eyes, starts and claws the air as Macbeth, reducing each powerful soliloquy to the ruminations of a north-country small business man (jewellery, perhaps, from his appraisal of Duncan's diamond). Sara Kestelman's oddly flouncing girl, urging the audience, wide-eyed open-armed posturing might better serve Shostakovich's Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk. The breking up of the witches speeches among them and the rest of the cast, the wilful wrenching of the text for ridiculous novel readings ("Double... double-toil and trouble..."; "she should have died hereafter tomorrow") and the overpowering timpani accompaniment are faults for which director Howard Davies is responsible, with the generally school-moored level of acting. Peck's parious passions are no substitute for Shakespeare's poetry and terror.

John James

## A sturdy vessel

For Those In Peril. By Christopher Short.  
National Youth Theatre at the Shaw Theatre.

The National Youth Theatre's 28th season - and, we're told, positively their last at the comfortable Shaw Theatre - gets under way with a bang with 22-year-old Christopher Short's new play *For Those In Peril*. A study of the so-called "Invergorrison Mutiny" of 1931, when able seamen prevented the British Atlantic Fleet from sailing as a protest against a proposed 2% per cent cut in pay, it was the £3,000 first prize winner in the recent NYT-Texaco playwrighting competition.

An all-male cast of 60 graphically portray all levels of life in the pre-war Navy. Admiralty officers, captains and even Sir Austen Chamberlain make regular appearances, but events are quite properly centred below decks on the imaginary HMS Heroic. There, a motley crew of ratings plot strikes and out-and-out mutiny from a variety of motives: Bolshevism is banded around, but the majority are more prosaically browbeaten off with the treatment they have received from the Government. Though it is an unconscionable time-a-coming, their mutiny when it happens is an exciting though

chaotically confused affair. Understandably so; as one of the characters remarks, no one in the British Navy knows much about disobeying orders.

Too long - less history and a deal more characterization would have improved it - Christopher Short's play is still a sturdy vessel for a strong NYT company. The programme lists all the Naval personnel who have trained and drilled them and also makes mention of the fact that the production was taken over by 23-year-old director Mike Afford when the NYT's founder-director Michael Croft was taken ill. He like his young company, is to be congratulated on one of the strongest National Youth Theatre productions for several years. Hugh David

Among the current batch of Penguin reprints three relate to Spain's greatest twentieth century poet, Federico Garcia Lorca's *Five Plays: Comedies and Tragico-comedies* (£2.95) brings some little known works to light; J L Gili's *Lorca: Selected Poems* (£1.95) joins the ranks of good and accessible translations; and Ian Gibson's *The Assassination of Federico Garcia Lorca* (£2.95), a well-written and sinister piece of detective retime-a-coming, their mutiny when it happens is an exciting though



ARTS

# Saturday night line-up

Caleb Williams  
C3, August 20-September 24.  
The Charterhouse of Parma  
C4, August 13-September 17.

The television "classic serial" has always tended to imply that there is something educational as well as entertaining about adaptations of literary works, but Channel 4's curious decision to schedule these two examples of the genre together on Saturday evenings looks almost like a syllabus on which, for all I know, they may ultimately propose to examine us. Candidates are advised that they should revise the influence of the French Revolution and be prepared to compare and contrast the political ideas of Godwin and Stendhal. They can mention Godwin's tendency to personify abstractions against Stendhal's delight in showing the intrigues and corruption at the centre of power in his petty Italian tyranny, since these themes comprise the better part of what the adapters have chosen to retain of the original works. They should make no reference to the novels themselves, since this would betray an excessive reverence for literary culture (which may be a selling point for the "classic serial"), but has little else to do with it.

Robin Chapman apparently considers Godwin's novel "wooden" and over-didactic, so he sets out to interest us by "modernising" it with no inordinate regard for the plot. Oddly enough, he agrees with his eighteenth century predecessors who adapted the book for the stage and, feeling that it lacked romantic interest, annoyed Godwin by remedying the omission. So episode one ends with Caleb wrapped around a serving wench like the hero of *Tom Jones* (I refer, of course, to Tony Richardson's version, not Henry Fielding's). For the moment it is his master, Falkland, spying on this scene through a telescope, who seems to be infected with an insatiable curiosity but if Caleb can wrap himself and get down to searching for Falkland's guilty secret, we may return to the Godwinian theme of discovery and pursuit. A further note for pedants: it probably never occurred to Godwin, with his abstract idea of justice, to make Caleb's father the man who is hanged for Falkland's crime, so that Caleb has a personal motive for pursuing the truth, but that oversight has also been remedied.

This undifferentiated attitude to the literary text does not, naturally, extend to visual details and both series go out of their way to suggest lavish expenditure of money and research to ensure historical accuracy. Since Stendhal is a more "classic" classic than Godwin, the Franco-Italian team responsible for *La Chartreuse de Parme* adopt a less cavalier approach to their author. They cannot catch his distinctive voice (one might as well try to televise Byron), and truly excruciating dubbing drowns even the echo; but the music is lovely (Haydn, Beethoven, Mozart, et al) and if there was some way of retaining it while eliminating the dialogue, this would be an agreeable audio-visual experience with no pretension to any literary antecedent.

In the last resort, I think it is Godwin who will come best out of this comparison, not because his novel has been more freely adapted, but because it was conceived as a popular tale, with all the elements of a thriller: a murder, investigation, pursuit and villainy. The "happy few" to whom Stendhal dedicated his novel have something better to do on Saturday evenings than watch television, surely?

Robin Buss



Macmillan have had the good idea of republishing Gatten Picon's Surrealists and Surrealism in a new large format (£18.00). Its well-chosen illustrations benefit greatly from the extra space. Above, Max Ernst's "The Hundred Headless Women Opens her August Sleeve", 1929.

## Studio work

A New Deal in Entertainment: Warner Brothers Inc in the 1930s. By Nick Roddick.  
BFI £11.95 0 85170 125 6. £6.95. 126 4

This well-researched book examines the ways the Warner Brothers studio engaged with America's social problems during the Depression.

It argues that while Warners are quite rightly famous for basing their films in "social realism" they were nevertheless committed to portraying and upholding in them "American" values - "rugged individualism", and so on - that had caused the Depression in the first place. *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1933), for example, may implicitly condemn the backstreet environment that will corrupt the Dead End Kids, but it does not suggest changes to society as a solution; rather it celebrates the personal

## ABC guide

The Coloured Pages - London 1983  
Mido Publications £5.50  
0 946523 00 2

Compiled, edited and designed by P D Pope and N A M Jennings this attractive, handy, costly little "buyers guide to materials and equipment for theatre arts and crafts" obtainable in London, runs

strength and honour of the gangster Rocky Sullivan (James Cagney). Worshipped by the boys, he heroically (and singlehandedly) saves the boys from a life of crime by pretending to "die yellow" in the electric chair. This faith in individual human resources is shown to have evolved in the studio's output in response, Roddick suggests, to the spirit of the New Deal.

Roddick shows that the studio's commitment to "social realism" was based as much on economic as on ideological considerations. Warners behaved as an industry, a "business", both in reacting pragmatically to consumer demand and in streamlining production methods to reduce costs. There were, then, sound economic reasons for the studio's consistency of product: put simply, a gangster picture in a contemporary setting doesn't cost much to make in the first place, but if the studio is geared to producing such films, it is cheaper still.

Lynne Truss

from Adhesives to Zips with an Appendix giving a brief selection of theatrical makers and designers covering animal costumes to wig-makers. Alphabetically ordered and coloured (for quick reference), each letter introduced by an old print reproduction (except for Nicola, page 39) it will be an indispensable tool for theatre design departments in theatres, colleges and institutes in London and elsewhere.

John James

# Pevsner's place

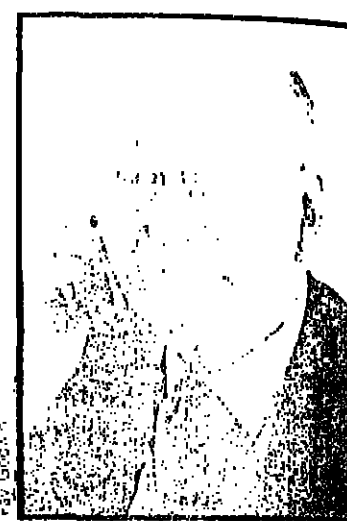
Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, the art and architecture historian, died last week at the age of 81. His 40-volume *The Buildings of England* and the *Penguin History of Art and Architecture* which he edited until 1977 are permanent testimony to his brilliantly synoptic and encyclopaedic grasp of art and style.

Born in Leipzig, he won his doctorate in the history of art at the age of 22. After gallery work in Dresden and a spell lecturing on British art at Göttingen, he became Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge; latterly he was emeritus professor in the history of art at Birkbeck College, London.

At first somewhat apologetically, but with increasing surefootedness, Pevsner brought the detached, critical gaze of the outsider to the nature and progress of English art. His 1955 Keith Lectures, *The Englishness of English Art*, republished by Penguin this week with a rather sad irony, expressed his scepticism that English artists would be in the forefront of contemporary movements; in mid-century, Pevsner believed, the role of the English was to follow not to lead.

In searching for a "cultural geography", a pattern of archetypes to define what was essentially "English", Pevsner presented a convincing theory of polarities, contradictory qualities which existed in tension with one another and produced the characteristic art-work of a nation. In England, he identified a dialectic between the detached rationalism of Hogarth, Reynolds and Constable and the expressionistic, irrational style of Blake and Fuseli. More technically, he saw English art and architecture as a fruitful opposition of linear and elaborated styles; the perpendicular and the Decorated of the fourteenth century; conservative and picturesque; tender curves and "flaming line". As in politics, Englishness was essentially conservative, a system of checks and balances.

As a twentieth century German and a naturalized Englishman, Pevsner



was carefully reticent on matters of race. For all his concern with definitions of national character, he never paraded the idea of a *Volks*. Where he surpassed his peers and rivals was in his awareness of place and in his sense of cultural geography as a historical process. The shapes of English buildings were the result of specific tribal collisions - Norman, Saxon, Celtic - and of interaction with real locations. His England was a physical place and his country-by-county guide is a record of places and not of architectural concepts. For a man apparently - though willingly - uprooted from his native soil, Nikolaus Pevsner always conveyed a deep sense of rootedness. In an age in which place has become increasingly abstract and notional, his absence will be greatly felt.

Brian Morton

*The Englishness of English Art* by Nikolaus Pevsner (new edition) Penguin/Penguin, £2.75, 0 14 055 034 3. The latest book in Pevsner's *The Buildings of England* series. London 2: South by Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, has also just been published (Allen Lane £11.95).

# Almost instant theatre

L'Umiak. Le Theatre de la Mar-Malle. Mother and the Fool. Jozef van den Berg. London International Festival of Theatre productions

They've been having a busy summer at Jacksons Lane Community Centre in Highgate, London. The builders are in improving the facilities, there are all the usual folk, yoga, tap-dancing and youth clubs, and last week a special five-day Summer Drama Workshop for local 11 to 16-year-olds. Sessions on improvisation, mask- and costume-making, song and acrobatics led up to a piece of "Almost Instant Theatre" in which an original production was created for one performance only. As if all that was not enough, like a dozen other fringe venues all over London, Jacksons Lane was also playing host to one of the shows making up this year's London International Festival of Theatre. Somehow L'Umiak was the ideal event for the Centre to present.

Performed in English, it was one of two productions brought to London by the normally French-speaking Theatre de la Marmaille of Montreal, Canada's leading children's theatre company. Researcher and devised by the actors, it was far more than just a play. Puppets, improvisation games, xeroxed sound and a lot of audience participation were vital to its evocation of the life and mythology of the Inuit Eskimos. Everyone had a part to play. Parents, children and actors all huddled on the floor of make-believe igloos, smelt pieces of dried fish as they were passed around, held hands on demand and wore fur

head-bands to denote their seniority in one of three Eskimo clans.

This involved, they were properly able to appreciate the tale of L'Umiak, an Inuit hunter desperately trying to find food for his family, and the co-operative values of his culture. ("The title 'L'Umiak' means 'The Collective Boat'") And, of course, to contrast them with our own. Although the many toddlers in the audience were delighted by the tale itself, which carried them to the Mother Eagle, it also had definite resonances for their parents. As an outstandingly effective and often stunningly beautiful production, Over at the Almeida Theatre in Islington (where once again audiences have to dodge the scaffolding and wet paint) the Dutch puppeteer Jozef van den Berg was doing his bit for LIFT '83. But forget all about Sooty, van den Berg is a brilliant and original performer. Though not specifically a children's entertainer, he has a simplicity and openness which people of any age find hard to resist.

In his full-length show *Mother and the Fool* he won over the audience in seconds. There was no pretence. He arrived on stage, his right hand draped in what looked like a duster, and talked, gently cajoling us into believing that the wrinkling square of fabric was his mysterious character. Puppets made out of walking sticks and old purses, and a very full of charm, dark humour and scorching that would have had Basil Brush recoiling in horror.

Hugh David

BOOKS

# Not so great Scott

Regency Editor: Life of John Scott. By Patrick O'Leary. Aberdeen University Press £14.00.

"It is utterly impossible to persuade an Editor that he is nobody," wrote Hazlitt. "In every periodical there are two essential parties - the writers and the public; the Editor and the printer's devil are merely the mechanical instruments to bring them together." He listed the faults of boring, pedestrian editors ("Some have a passion for sticking in the word *however*, in order to impede the march of the style...") as every journalist does - except when he is editing some other journalist's work. Like a driver getting out of his car and trying to walk across a busy road, he then ceases to feel that pedestrians exist only to impede his motoring.

John Scott was one of Hazlitt's best editors and he took care that Hazlitt should not impede his own

progress. In 1810 Scott was campaigning against military flogging, holding that 1,000 lashes were too many for any soldier's back, pointing out that Napoleon managed to win battles without the traditional British deterrent. This was dangerous talk. Cobbett had just been fined and jailed for making the very same point, since the Tories saw it as pro-Napoleon propaganda. Scott's paper was taken to court too: the proprietor, Johnny Drake, took the blame for Scott's article and was fined and imprisoned as Cobbett had been. Patrick O'Leary quotes Scott's funny description of the Tory mob of gentry and clergy at the trial, yearning to see the left-wing extremist well punished.

O'Leary's book proves Scott to have been a good writer as well as a brilliant commissioning editor. Besides Hazlitt, he had Carlyle, John Clare, De Quincy, Keats, Lamb, Landor and Stendhal writing in his

columns. But in that fiercely partisan world he had to steer Hazlitt (genuinely pro-Napoleon) away from politics and into art and theatre. John Scott was a moderate, liberal that he got himself killed by a representative of the Tory press. During the interregnum known as the Regency, Sir Walter Scott was posing as King of Scotland: sheltered by his Tory tarian robes, Lockhart, his son-in-law, collaborated with other young Tories in the *Edinburgh Magazine*, a more sophisticated version of our own *Private Eye*, specializing in libels against the left-wingers of London. When John Scott (himself an Aberdonian) stuck up for his London protégés, he was set up for a duel at Chalk Farm and shot dead. Patrick O'Leary thinks this was the result of his second, Peter Patmore, not understanding the Scottish dialect of the other participants in the duel. Walter Scott

(no relation) comes out badly from this story. Formerly on *The Times* staff, Patrick O'Leary did his research "during that paper's prolonged suspension of publication": his experience of the journalist's condition enhances his understanding of John Scott's world. Almost all the star writers of the period make an appearance, from Wordsworth and Byron (John Scott's schoolfellow in Aberdeen) to the humbugging "Christopher North" and "Janus Weathercock", the charming murderer. The fact that John Scott was not himself a star writer - just a straightforwardly talented and decent journalist - makes this biography a nicely down-to-earth introduction to his world of English birds and Scots reviewers, posing as gentlemen and men of honour while destroying themselves and each other in a dangerous fog of pseudonyms and anonymity.

D A N Jones

# Hour of death

Charles Dickens: Resurrectionist. By Andrew Sanders. Macmillan £0.00 333 30727 5.

Death obtruded itself upon the Victorian consciousness. Abominable living conditions, poor sanitation, and malnutrition precipitated epidemics which overwhelmed the City graveyards and made the dangerous inadequacies of posthumous "care" in the form of the tradition of burial within the City walls ("intra-mural interment") more and more obvious. Dr Sanders, who has a nose for these things, is very ready with the resulting reports and statistics.

This overwhelming sense of the co-presence of death, particularly in the metropolis, makes its treatment by novelists equally intrusive and a key to their imaginative quality. The thesis here is, as you would expect, that Dickens is better at death than anyone else and that he gets better at it as he goes on, proved by close inspection of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Dombey and Son*, *Bleak House*, *Our Mutual Friend* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

No doubt he is, and does. Dr Sanders leads us through the earnest

puppetry of death-bed scenes conducted by earlier novelists and funeral games conducted by undertakers contemporary with Dickens to show prime examples of creative and religious bad faith. But of Dickens' own lapses from taste he is insufficiently critical. For understandable reasons relating to the parlous state of traditional religious attitudes and his own harrowing experience of bereavement, Dickens in the face of fictional death can perpetrate mawkish moments of solemn sentiment that must have required a rigid suppression of his own keen sense of the ridiculous. However, there is no doubt that Dickens' concept of the "redemptive" becomes subtler and more imminent as his art develops. The two go hand in hand. Religious and creative *mawkishness* are one.

This last insight, however, is an extrapolation from Dr Sanders' book, rather than an emanation to which his arguments gently lead us on. Once more a book with an admirable scholarly base fails to press its case as a result of its insufficiently rigorous critical superstructure.

Edward Neill

# Touchstones of progress

A Liberal Descent: Victorians and the English Past. By J W Burrow. Cambridge University Press £7.95. 0 521 27482 6. A brilliant piece of intellectual history.

J W Burrow lays bare the "Whig" touchstones of progress and continuity in English history. Setting Macaulay, Stubbs and Freeman against the more tortured thinking of Carlyle's biographer J A Froude, he moves on to examine the Victorians' interpretation of the three great epochs of the British state: the Conquest, the split with Rome, and the Glorious Revolution of 1688, which sowed the seeds of nineteenth century parliamentarianism.

Liberalism and Society: L T Hobhouse and Political Argument in England 1880 - 1914. By Stefan Collini. Cambridge University Press £8.95. 0 521 27408 7. "Progress" remained the standard-cry of Liberal political theory and sociology, a safely abstract and forward-looking concept to pit against more dramatic visions of social history. And if the Hobhouse style seems familiar to *Guardian* readers,

much of that political and editorial style stems from his days with the paper in its northern fastness. Salutary reading. Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth Century Working-Class Autobiography. By David Vincent. Methuen University Paperbacks £4.95. 0 416 34670 7. Recounting the personal testimonies of those who were habitually bypassed by the abstractions of liberal (and Social Darwinist, and, later, Marxist) thought, David Vincent reveals an unexpected articulacy and a surprisingly large body of work. History is not a rational process of progression and continuity but a personalized search for sustenance (physical and spiritual) in a world dominated simultaneously by harsh economic necessity and by irrelevant superstructures of social and political thought. Vincent's most striking and disturbing recognition is how little social theory touches the actuality of working class life. Then, as now.

Brian Morton

Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325-1345. By Ibn Battuta. Routledge & Kegan Paul £5.95. The reissue of this volume is a pleasure. A warning is needed: what is here is unlikely to be a relation put together from a diary, or from notes written contemporaneously with the travelling, or rather what Ibn Battuta, when he had settled down once more in Morocco in 1355, recalled and dictated at the command

of the Sultan. Moreover, the work is an abridgement of what was dictated, embellished at times with rhetorical flourishes added by the scribe. Nonetheless, the narrative is enthralling and instructive. The far-flung medieval Muslim world, from China to Spain, comes to life in this tale of 75,000 miles of journeying.

Pierre Watter

# Cold comfort

Education as History: Interpreting Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Education. By Harold Silver. Methuen £12.50 0 416 33310 9. £6.50 33320 6.

"The free application of cold water to the person of children is very important, both physically and morally" - according to the educational reformer Mary Carpenter, a century ago. Harold Silver quotes her in his latest book, which is itself a kind of cold-water-treatment for the history of education. *Education as History* is a collection of recycled articles, reviews and conference papers from the past 10 years or so. Some of them report Silver's original historical research into matters like the influence of the Social Science movement on educational reform in Britain and America, the arguments around half-time schooling in Britain, or the educational policies associated with anti-poverty programmes in the 1960s.

But the book is intended to be of wider interest. Its governing purpose is to challenge the ideas - both left-wing-sociological and right-wing-traditional - which, inculcated during a student's rites of passage into teaching, populate the profession's folklore and also, therefore, set the agenda for most of the scholarly work done under the heading of "history of education".

Silver's main technique is to show that many of these historical ideas are simply incorrect: half-time schooling had plenty of support among would-be progressives, for instance; "The State" has not been at all coherent or driving in education Act, the favourite text of British historians of education, was far from being the natural expression of progress that it is normally taken to be.

Silver also challenges the orthodoxies on the more tricky terrain of the interpretation of opinion and its influences on policy. His approach is exhibited in an extremely well-sourced essay "Expectations of Higher Education", which is by far the longest chapter in the book. The rather comic message is that the hopes and ideals for higher education, held by teachers, employers, students and politicians, have been as confused as Harold Wilson's vision of the new urban institutions which were to "reflect the pulsating throbs of local industry". The interminable debates about the "vocational", the "liberal", the "technical", and so on, emerge from Silver's account, as mere shufflings with packs of words: apparent unanimities were only agreements on the use of particular verbal formulas whose meaning was left completely undecided. But vastly influential policies were made out of this verbal fudge.

*Education as History* has the usual weaknesses of an anthology, and it is surprising that the publishers did not take more care to eliminate repetition. There is even, among the 830 extremely helpful footnotes, one which simply reiterates, word for word, the sentence to which it refers. Silver also slips, occasionally, from his usual efficient informativeness, into lukewarm vagueness, especially when he discusses what he calls "theory", and the need for it to keep in touch with "history", or when he trustfully urges his readers to "escape from untested, comfortable assumptions". But the cold plunges are invigorating, and, who knows, they may do us some good.

Jonathan Rée

# Next week

John Weightman on the 300 year progress towards universal literacy in France.

Brandon Russell



## BOOKS

## Land army

**The Earth: Past, Present and Future.** By Michael Bradshaw. Hodder and Stoughton Educational £3.95. 0 340 239484.

**Earth and Man.** By B J Knapp. George Allen & Unwin £4.95. 0 04 551055 2.

**Landforms, an Introduction to Geomorphology.** By Ian Galbraith and Patrick Wiegand. Oxford University Press £2.95. 0 19 913271 2.

**Study the Earth Series.** By Michael Atherton and Roger Robinson. Water at Work. 0 340 23945 X. Air and Earth. 23946 8. Rocks and Earth History. 24187 X. Useful Materials from the Earth. 241888.

**Weathering and Erosion.** By Stephen T Trudgill. Butterworth £4.95. 0 408 10835 2.

*The Earth: Past, Present and Future* sets its sights on 16-plus geology students, or those taking the subject as an additional sixth form course. *Earth and Man* and *Landforms* are both aimed at physical geography courses, whereas the series *Study the Earth* sensibly keeps its options open, offering four books that can fit variously into geography, geology, environmental studies, and, I hope, science courses too.

Bradshaw's *The Earth* is a revision of its successful predecessor *A New Geology*. Those familiar with the earlier text will find a major re-ordering of topics, but many old diagrams re-appear albeit clothed in a rather better typeface. Part I of the book opens with an incredibly dense five-page resume of the subject of geology and some major facts about the Earth and its surface features. The reader is told that a large number of observations about the Earth can be fitted into patterns, but no attempt is made to explore these via pupil activities - an omission that characterizes the rest of the book, and is in stark contrast to the teaching approach of the *Study the Earth* series and *Landforms*. Many of the diagrams are poor, and lack scales. The outdated terms *Siol* and *Sima* are still used; what's wrong with plain straightforward continental and oceanic crust? Part II deals with surfaces processes, in-

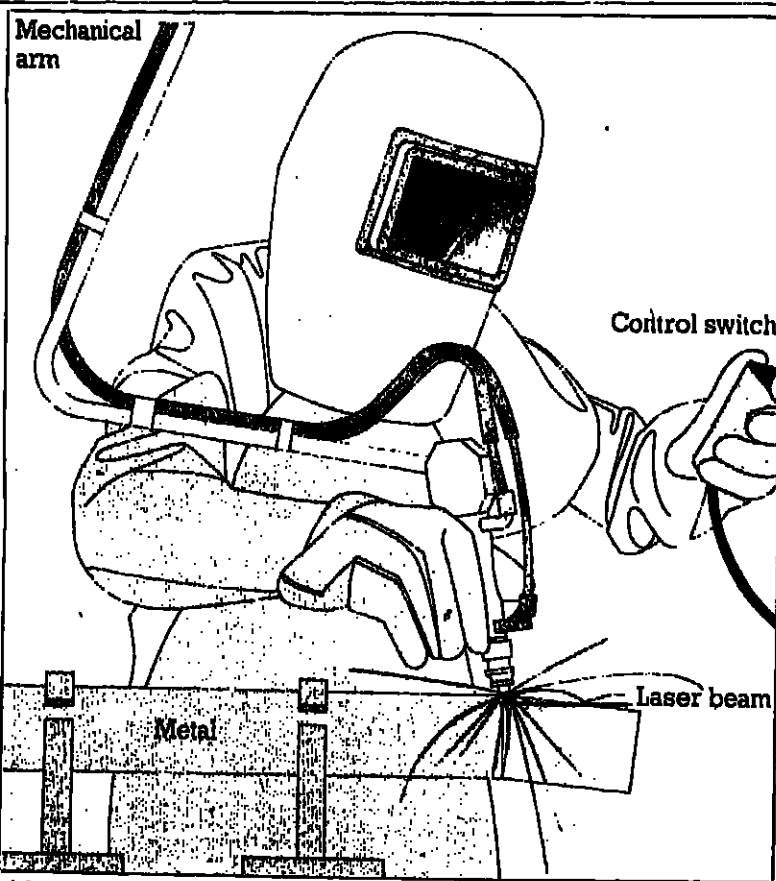
cluding volcanism and earthquakes. Part III, which is by far the longest, is concerned with interpreting the past, starting with small scale features (rocks, minerals and fossils) and ending with evidence from other worlds.

*Earth and Man*, *Landforms* and *Study the Earth* are refreshingly poles apart from the rather staid academic oriented presentation of *Earth: Past, Present and Future*. Not only do they use full colour illustrations (*Landforms* is entirely in full colour), but the styles, reading levels and page layouts all combine in each case to make the subject matter interesting and relevant to pupils' everyday experience. Of course, such colour publications are relatively more expensive than line drawings and half tone photos, but the likelihood is that whereas the high flyers will get through *The Earth* to good effect, the less able will find it daunting, but would be stimulated by the approach of the other books.

*Earth and Man* covers the whole gamut of physical geography. Its 18 chapters are divided into 4 parts, treating in turn the Origin of Land and Sea, Atmosphere and Oceans, Soils, Vegetation and Man, and finally Shaping the Land. A four-page introductory section sets the tone for the approach adopted in the book; its first sentence reads "Did you know that each year more people die from drinking water than alcohol?" Relevant issues about man and his environment recur throughout the book. Within the text, some material is presented in "boxes" which either present individual topics, or useful summaries of several pages. The only parts of the book that I found a little depressing, but I admit regretfully necessary, were the groups of exam-style questions at the end of each chapter.

*Landforms* is precisely what its sub-title indicates it to be; the book covers rocks, earth movements, weathering and slopes, rivers, ice, coasts and deserts. The text contains questions for pupils to consider, and each chapter ends with review questions. Like *Earth and Man*, the geological introduction is basically sound, but much briefer.

The teaching approach used in the *Study the Earth* series betters all these books. Like most modern sci-



A laser "gun" being used to cut metal - from *The Electronic Revolution: Lasers* by Robin McKie (Franklin Watts £4.25) which moves, with clear colourful diagrams and pictures, from supermarket scanners to, of course, eye surgery.

ence texts, all four books encourage pupils to actively explore, via a series of "activity boxes". *Earth* materials and processes. The three texts on *Rocks and Earth History*, *Air and Earth* and *Water at Work* cover similar ground to *Earth and Man*, and more besides.

*Useful Materials from the Earth* could fit into geology, geography and conventional science courses. It summarizes what the Earth's resources are, and then deals in turn with water, trees, energy, rocks (limestone, aggregates), minerals and metals. The second half of the book is devoted to six special studies, such as "Farmers and Earth's resources", "Rocks for buildings", and "Seas ancient and modern" (ie salt).

The order in which the books are listed at the beginning of this review is, in presentation terms, a spectrum. At one end is *The Earth*, tailor made for one year sixth cramming courses in O level geology, and at the other the *Study the Earth*

series, in which the pupil is encouraged to actively explore the nature of familiar processes and materials. Paradoxically, the end-members of the spectrum originate from the same publishing house.

Whereas the level of *Weathering and Erosion* is clearly odd man out, it is supportive to the others, for it provides an introduction to project work and a data source in the fields of weathering and erosion. I concur with this statement from the book's preface which implicitly suggests for "simple, effective practical methods" of demonstrating the processes and effects of weathering and erosion which are cheap and viable. Let us hope that teachers who use this book will show it to their colleagues in science departments in order to help convince them that there should be more overlap in the teaching of what is regarded as conventional school science and geology and physical geography.

R C Wilson

## Changing gear

**New Technology and Industrial Change.** By I Benson and J Lloyd. Kogan Page £11.95. 0 85038 284 X. £4.95. 698 5.

The scientific-technical revolution, with an impact on every aspect of our lives still seems only partially grasped by the public at large.

The authors of this book believe that the issues, especially in political terms, should be faced, and solutions to the inevitable problems sought, before it is too late for constructive action.

Changes in the pattern of employment, in the structure of the economy and the role of the state are among paramount factors. In its wide-ranging survey of such matters, this book does show some concern about our provision of technical education. It suggests that, by comparison with, say, France, Germany, Japan or America, there is still some way to go in this country before parity of opportunity is achieved.

There is a guarded warning that the qualifications of the "Technical and Business Education Council" (it should be "Technician"), and the two have now combined) have still to gain acceptance from employers. The work of the industrial training boards is touched on, but there is little attention to the training provision for unemployed school-leavers.

But in this overview of changing production processes labour-management relations, transnational companies and social contracts, the understandable that relatively little space is given to education. Or is it? It is arguable that education holds the key. An overhaul of the school system, associated with the provision of greater (and more varied) resources for further education could mean a greater understanding of technology and smoother acceptance of the inevitable changes to come.

F W Kellaway

## All clear

**The Scientific Revolution.** By P J Harman. Methuen £1.50. 0 416 350402.

There is a certain way of writing for the young which is also the best way of writing for adults. When academics write for adults they often write for each other. So writing to be clear and not too bothered by footnotes and by the need to ward off captious rivals is an excellent discipline for them. The excellent pamphlet is a model of position for intelligent minds as uninfected by the need to cover everything and display the supporting apparatus of scholarship. It is also a standing rebuke to those many little A level cribs which confine and confine the mind so effectively and which ought to be passport to a resounding F.

Dr Harman neatly encapsulates various phases of scientific change and of incubations in the intellectual climate, from the time of the unending triumph of mechanism, philosophically in the case of Descartes, scientifically with Newton. He gives an eminently fair exposition of the way religious doctrines both blocked and released scientific motivation.

Not all of these doctrines were Christian, of course, and the negative and positive aspects of the Hellenistic traditions are helpfully brought out. Then we have a balanced account in the more familiar relationship, again negative and positive, between Baconian empiricism and the various kinds of Puritanism. We end with man's pride humbled and his optimism relatively untrammelled. Every school library should have this little booklet.

David Martin

## RESOURCES

Flat on his face, clasped hands protecting the back of his head, Dr John Green, Head of Atmospheric Physics at Imperial College, was visibly quaking. "Look out," he shouted, "there's no saying that will happen when this lad throws." This lad, tiny nine-lb and puce with laughter, fell about. It was, after all, *Phun Physics*.

When they recovered their sangfroid, these two environmental scientists explained that they were presently engaged in rigging an apparatus which would allow a tree, unattended and undisturbed, to record its own movements on a piece of paper.

So far that week the *Phun Physics* group (9 to 13-year-olds), had produced a computer program which, given the angle of inclination and the leaf-to-twig-to-branch ratio, would simulate the growth and leaf pattern of a tree; they had set mammal traps and subsequently calculated the speed, acceleration and motivation of the released field mice and bank voles; observed the rodents' preference for the edge of the tree canopy and found

that, apart from the area immediately outside the tree, the worst place to take shelter in a storm is immediately against the trunk.

The best place is at the edge of the canopy - you have the thickest cover there and all the leaves are sloped to receive the maximum sunlight. That's why both rain and insects fall off," a kindly 10-year-old explained.

"*Phun Physics*" - "Art is a Way of Finding Out" and "In Parallel with Hypotenuse" were all courses at an Explorers summer camp in Ipswich, which would allow a tree, unattended and undisturbed, to record its own movements on a piece of paper.

So far that week the *Phun Physics* group (9 to 13-year-olds), had produced a computer program which, given the angle of inclination and the leaf-to-twig-to-branch ratio, would simulate the growth and leaf pattern of a tree; they had set mammal traps and subsequently calculated the speed, acceleration and motivation of the released field mice and bank voles; observed the rodents' preference for the edge of the tree canopy and found

that, apart from the area immediately outside the tree, the worst place to take shelter in a storm is immediately against the trunk.

so it ended up as a gigantic problem-solving exercise. There were jelly slings... It was a great success.

"The cook, who makes the jellies to a standard consistency, thinks we're all crazy," a houseparent told me. "But it's lovely to see the older ones letting their hair down and allowing themselves to play." Swimming and yoga, silly competitions and team games where players are identified by their painted noses, all help to break down barriers.

"The maths course is really stimulating," one of the few girls on the Hypotenuse course told me cheerfully. "We've had Dr South, on specific and general relativity and Prof Frank on partial differential equations. It's

Catastrophe Theory if you want to sit in this afternoon. Because there's such a wide range of - well, not age or ability so much as experience - the lecturers tend to start from first principles and hope to take us all with them to the end.

"The maths is great but the social life is even better," she said and went

off to finalize the disco arrangements.

The NAGC has been running residential summer courses for years now - to provide for the brightest children and social life for the brightest children. Fifteen years ago, when I first saw them in action, they were deliberately low-key affairs and barely respectable in an educational atmosphere of fierce equality and enforced mediocrity. Then, parental suggestions of acceleration or special enrichment programmes were met with pursed-lipped disapproval by the schools and a dispiriting number of children were taken out of the state sector by desperate parents.

At Ipswich, the children were equally divided between state and private schools and the course tutors, helpers and houseparents, seemed either to be L.E.A. advisers or to have sent by them.

One houseparent had been sent on the course by her adviser "... because I'm working with children with special needs and it was felt that I should have a look at the other end of the scale. I've been surprised at how

many similarities there are. Both groups will denigrate their own efforts as a way of asking for positive feedback.

"There are different stresses for these children, though the same isolation can exist. I think that one or two feel they have been labelled and may not be up to it. I'd love to see how my severely-deprived kids would respond to this environment. It has been marvellous to see the increase in enjoyment and decrease in apprehension as the week has gone by."

Roger Kiddie, a primary teacher from Gravesend in Kent and the ecological half of the *Phun Physics* team, was equally impressed with the week. "It's a busman's holiday for me, a pleasure to work with children who are so motivated. I brought my mammal traps, bird-ringing equipment, that sort of thing to work alongside John. Basically we were looking at a shape, the tree, and relating that shape, physically and mathematically, to the animals occupying the environment. Well... that's how it started. But they've got such lively minds we leapt off after probability and all sorts of things..."

In art, too, all sorts of things happened. Under the stylish leadership of Ann Fairman, primary teacher, and Alec Pearson, head of art at Skipton School, the group made cheerful 3D stick models, giant geodesic domes in art straw, landscape murals and abstracts on a grand scale, mobiles and tiny slide pictures out of burnt, painted, superimposed pieces of coloured film, all ready for an audio-visual presentation on the last evening.

Art, too, was interdisciplinary. The lunch-hour was punctuated by a quick trip to the computer to watch the Mondrians called up by one of the older explorers. "Show us the program - put it on a magenta base - bleahh - go back to red and white," they chimed.

"They have the same enthusiasm and concentration, whatever they are doing," said a houseparent. "I went down to the art-room yesterday to have a go at the slide-making. The atmosphere was electric."

Wandering round the classrooms, the subject-sex-bias was still evident, but not quite as marked as a decade ago, I thought. Girls positively dominated the art course, were slightly outnumbered in physics and still had a reasonable presence, perhaps 25 per cent, in maths. What they lacked in numbers they certainly made up for in enthusiasm: "Lovely, it's like play-school all over again," overheard one young lady as the lecturer demonstrated Catastrophe Theory with the aid of elastic rope and a saw blade in compression.

How did an Explorers course compare with school? "You probably wouldn't learn as much," a thoughtful 11-year-old explained as she showed me the grounds, "or maybe you wouldn't realize you were learning so much. But it's definitely more fun when the subjects are integrated." Watching the tutorial double-acts in progress I could only agree.



## The gift of learning

Sixty children, 20 sympathetic and enthusiastic adults in a stately home/school - it could hardly fail.

Susan Thomas went to see for herself at the Explorers summer camp for gifted children.

Children's literature  
Reading aloud with Miss Mee

**Tales From Allotment Lane School.** By Margaret Joy. Faber £4.50. 571.11992 1.

**Kamla and Kate.** By Jamila Gavin. Methuen £3.95. 416 22780 5.

**The Old Man Who Sneezed.** Read-Aloud Stories by Dorothy Edwards. Methuen £4.95. 416 26120 5.

**Better Skelter.** By Pamela Oldfield. Blackie £5.50. 216 91408 6.

**Mr Wizz.** By Allen Sadler. Abelard £5.25. 200.72804 0.

**Crazy Animal Stories.** By Anne-Marie Dalmas. Hodder and Stoughton £3.95. 340 22626 3.

Three of the above books are specifically recommended as "read-aloud" books. *Tales From Allotment Lane School* is a charming collection for the five and sixes. With a teacher like Miss Mee as the star attraction, what child wouldn't long to attend her school? She is the Perfect Teacher. She never gets ruffled, never panics, always says, and does the right things with cheerful friendliness. But in the episode *A Class Trip* one forgets about Miss Mee and recalls with shame and frustration what the poor inexperienced teacher has to put up with when she

(he) ventures outside the school precincts with a whole class. *Mary's Busy Morning* reminds us of one of the most endearing aspects of children's behaviour: the shy but obvious delight of two youngsters at being the Chosen Ones to deliver top priority messages to other classes, and their comradely jogging of each other's memories in moments of crisis. *Hunt The Caterpillar* tells about the development and metamorphosis of that engaging insect, and this, together with the miscellany of ideas in *Halloween*, should be of great help to most teachers.

*Kamla and Kate* does not strike one as spectacularly appropriate for reading aloud but it's a brave stab at depicting and promoting friendship between different races. The Grand Finale of this little volume is about a Diwali Party - the celebration of the Hindu Festival of Light - which is described in splendid and vivid detail.

The late and much-missed Dorothy Edwards provides an excellent gaggle of very short read-alouds in *The Old Man Who Sneezed*. There are two light-hearted cautionary pieces among them, all told with her customary charm and skill. One is a warning against gluttony, using the plotline of a non-existent pig who plonked a non-existent pig extra helpings. His mother, cottoned on and pays him back in his own coin - invisible portions of food.

The other teaches us to put our things away properly so they don't get lost or misused. But the best is a diminutive canine Canute whose devotion to his master enables him to tell the waves where to get off - a piece of shrewd insight into the doggy mind. Finally there's one which commends respect for one's elders - even when they are only dolls.

Pamela Oldfield's own story about a six-year-old boy's crush on a "yellow-haired" maiden of 10 makes a splendid opening to her varied collection. Contributors include Ted Hughes, Charles Cusley and James Reeves. It's a splendid idea to introduce each piece with a mini biography of the author; children get a great thrill out of meeting a live writer and this is probably the next best thing.

As for the other contributions: *How The Polar Bear Became* is as beautifully poetic a tale as one would expect from Ted Hughes. The two stories by Paul Biegel - about magic shoes and a paper palace - strike me as pedestrian and unoriginal - certainly not vintage Biegel. Alf Prøyssen's *The Mice and the Xmas Tree* is an unsavoury mishmash of anthropomorphized mice, a Christmas tree, a sophisticated Granny Mouse and a spirit-of-Christmas generosity cat. The harmonious consistency by those two masters of the genre - Potter

and Utley - seems completely lacking here.

Full marks to Allen Sadler for a super story about a really human magician, for a change - not a real magician, and for a real human six-year-old, whose mind Mr Sadler reads with a rare perspicacity. Mr Wizz's tentative "explanations" of his praxidigitations show a nice balance between a sympathetic reluctance to exploit the child's wide-eyed innocence and a keen desire on behalf of both of them to keep the illusion alive. To the adult, who appreciates both viewpoints, the outcome is totally entrancing.

There's a natty fluency about the telling of *Crazy Animal Stories* and of incubations in the intellectual climate, from the time of the unending triumph of mechanism, philosophically in the case of Descartes, scientifically with Newton. He gives an eminently fair exposition of the way religious doctrines both blocked and released scientific motivation. Not all of these doctrines were Christian, of course, and the negative and positive aspects of the Hellenistic traditions are helpfully brought out. Then we have a balanced account in the more familiar relationship, again negative and positive, between Baconian empiricism and the various kinds of Puritanism. We end with man's pride humbled and his optimism relatively untrammelled. Every school library should have this little booklet.

Stephen Corrin

## Thinking along new L-lines

by Nick Thomas

like Snap or Happy Families - but with the major difference that players are generally allowed, within parameters, to define their own sets. For example, one may have to connect the cards one is dealt, or to guess someone else's connections. What do a wheelbarrow, a car, and a bucket have in common? They all carry things, and there are other possible answers, all "correct".

These games stimulate mental muscles which can atrophy under more formal and closed-ended regimes. A few of them seem awkward, but most impress with their "obviousness" - which is to say, their authenticity. Included with the cards are two booklets, one describing the games, the other discussing the mental processes involved; the different forms of set-making called for by different games. Clearly, the cards can also be used to work with spelling, story-making and so on; de-

limited material. Lateral thinking with a vengeance; and rather close to children's own natural style of play, in which a saucer is one minute a boat, the next a space helmet, the next a drum. Not that these games are only for young children. Each is coded for suitability in three age groups, starting at three and going up to adults.

Most of the games revolve around constructing various kinds of sets:

Many of the games involve an adult facilitator, and the potential for use in classrooms is tremendous. A single kit can be used by a large group (there are 100 different cards); and in fact making one's own copies, or if this is against copyright one's own version, would take very little effort.

The *L-Game* seems as though it must be educational, but quite how is difficult to say. Again, it is im-

mensely simple, quite obvious as soon as someone else has thought of it. On a four-by-four square board, two players each manoeuvre a three-by-two L shape and a single-square piece, trying to render the other player incapable of moving. There are several definite "solutions", but reaching one of them is quite difficult. "Can be learnt in seconds and played for hours", in fact; and unlike noughts-and-crosses, for instance, there are no forced outcomes - in theory two good players could play for ever. Surely maths teachers could find some basic principles here?

Dr de Bono is not just annoyingly clever; not just rich and successful. He is a man with a mission: to convince us all of our own potential. One theme that runs through all the material accompanying these games is the importance of not underestimating children. He insists that both these games, under the right circumstances, can be played by three-year-olds; and that young children may have the advantage of adults. For such important wisdom one can almost forgive him his rightness.





## RESOURCES

## Children on TV

In 200 schools this autumn children will spend Monday morning lessons discussing how a young lad cleaned the teeth of a crocodile. Or they may talk of a little girl being seen in two by a magician or a small English schoolboy's initiation into a Red Indian tribe by the famous Iron Eyes Cody.

Their discussions will be recorded and used to improve the quality of television programmes. For Central Television have asked Oxford Polytechnic's TV Research Unit to evaluate their children's programmes, starting with *The Saturday Show*.

The Television Research Unit will seek the views of 6,000 children, their teachers and parents and the content of *The Saturday Show* will be the basis for creative writing and other class work during the week.

"As a programme maker and a former teacher I want to know as much as possible about my audience, who they are and what they like," says the producer, Glyn Edwards. "I want feedback from them which can be incorporated into programme-making policy - a dialogue between audience and programme makers."

The unit will hand over weekly reports on the live show during the 30-week series. This gives plenty of time for their recommendations to be incorporated. "The bits the kids like can be improved and the unpopular items revamped or dropped. . . . But we won't give in totally to the audience - they would probably all want video nasties!"



Swapping places

Central normally use commercial research agencies, but they are impressed by the fact that Oxford Polytechnic can conduct the study as part of the school curriculum. According to Central Research Manager Kenda Harris "they are different because they are actually doing it within schools."

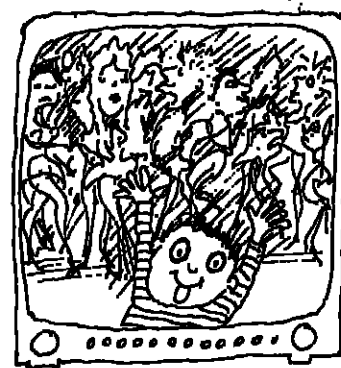
So it's the children themselves who say whether they were impressed by a youngster snookering Steve Davies or if they enjoyed watching a headmaster swap places for a day with one of his pupils, past spots on *The Saturday Show*.

Leader of the unit and senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Development is the Rev Brian Brown, dubbed the Pop Parson in the 60s because he was chaplain to The Swinging Blue Jeans, the Merseybeats, Freddie and the Dreamers and other pop groups, and was an honorary member of Liverpool's Cavern, early home of the Beatles. He believes the existence of the TV Research Unit is a denial of the validity of the recent DES report: "Popular TV and Schoolchildren".

"The report perpetuated the myth that TV is an enemy of education and TV companies are abusing and using children. Contrary to the received wisdom, makers are anxious to improve the quality of their programmes. The point isn't particularly what we say about them, but that we exist."

The unit was set up originally with money from the Joseph Rank Benevolent Trust for a project studying Sunday school programmes. Now it has more than £50,000-worth of contracts in the pipeline from programme makers. "We're going to improve the standard of their broadcasts."

Programme makers, according to Brian Brown, are falling over themselves to get it right. Since the unit was set up a year ago the researchers have been inundated with work and are having to take on more staff. "We give



## Jane Last on means of assessing young people's reactions to television

producers direct access to their audience. We feed actual live comment on their programmes back to them to take seriously week after week - not graphs and statistics."

"Our research is involved with qualitative evaluation of content and examination of the programme makers' assumptions about their audience. This is where our research style is distinctive from others. We are seeking to answer the questions producers want to answer, but don't have time."

The unit has just completed a 200-page report for Tyne Tees TV on their live rock and youth magazine show for Channel 4, *The Tube*. It was commissioned in 1982 to evaluate the appropriateness of style, language and content relative to the culture of young people.

For 15 months the team were given absolute access to the production of *The Tube*. They formed a unique

relationship with the programme makers and were involved in production meetings and live sets and talked to everyone from the producer to the hairdressers. "We were regarded as part of the team. But our report is in no way sycophantic. They wanted us to be honest and we retained academic objectivity."

The "Tyne Tees Papers" were produced each week and over 3,500 children throughout the country took part. Finally *The Tube* makers received a pat on the back from the TRU. "They worked on the assumption that if the quality of the programme was right then they would get audiences. They never bent the high standards they set themselves."

"The whole report is based on what the kids say - that's why we were so angry about the DES report" which was what teachers think kids say, with no evidence whatsoever. It gave a totally false view."

"We offer a unique service because of our contact with schools," says Brian Brown. "The unit gets almost 100 per cent cooperation from teachers. They set up conferences in schools so the producers can go and meet the children and listen to them. Staff cooperate because they recognize a respectable academic purpose. Fifth and sixth formers give up a whole day of lessons to watch videos and we record their discussions afterwards."

"The DES report talks of refusal to innovate and reluctance to face the audience - we can't accuse programme makers of either of those."

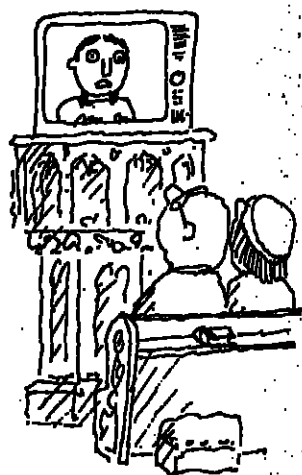
The unit has also been asked to investigate children and home videos. This work was commissioned in June before the announcement of Graham Bright's Private Members Bill to outlaw video nasties which will soon be before the House of Commons. Twenty-two per cent of children have access to videos, mostly in urban working-class homes, Brian Brown will be looking at what kids watch and who

they watch with. He will investigate who pays for the videos, the availability of material and whether kids go to video parties. The unit will discover whether programmes declared unsuitable for young children are actually seen by them at a time of public debate on the influence of pornography and violent films on youngsters.

"Extensive laboratory and field experiments into the persuasive potential of propaganda films has failed to demonstrate that even the most carefully prepared ideological message had any measurable effect upon opinions firmly held. Parents, friends, and the leader of the youth club or Sunday school are far more influential in opinion formers than the messages of television," Brian Brown believes. "Anxieties about the influences of TV on the behaviour and beliefs of children may be misplaced."

"TV was not the cause of the sexual and ethical revolution which accompanied the age of affluence. It arrived conveniently to play a part in making the new ideas more readily available, but it was not responsible for creating the Beatles, Mary Quant, the pill, the trial of Lady Chatterley and the pop industry."

\* Popular TV and School Children Commissioned by HM Inspector.



Video in church

## MEDIA

## Fighting the system

## VIDEO

*That's the Way* Seven 26-minute programmes VHS or Betamax £45 plus VAT from Yorkshire Television Ltd, The Television Centre, Leeds LS3 1JS (0532-438283)

*That's the Way*, one of YTV's "non-theatrical programmes" now available on film or videotape, aims to show how to cope with "the system" - officialdom, bureaucracy or whatever other name you like to give to "them" as opposed to "us". The seven programmes deal with all kinds of problems we may come up against trying to meet fundamental needs like housing, health, and education, with budgeting and consumerism, and how to cope if we come up against the law.

YTV's aim is "making information entertaining", and the byword here seems to be variety. We see the same three presenters in many different guises within the space of

each programme; out in the field charting the unsung struggles of individuals against bureaucracy; epic horrors, some of them, like the story of the old age pensioner arrested for stealing a turkey, who refused to plead guilty, decided to conduct his own defence in court and though not convicted, was never able to clear his name. But there are success stories: the homeless who do get a council house and the vendor who does get redress against a grasping estate agent.

Other times the presenters are back at base, perched on studio stools, contriving to look efficient without being official, and dispensing firm but friendly advice.

Most often, though, they're not stool sitters but stool pigeons, role-

playing bureaucracy's butts in disastrous scenarios illustrating just what not to do. Characters turn up in all kinds of trouble: losing their temper with officials, who are then unable to explain what benefits they can claim; being bullied and bluffed by the GP who doesn't explain medical terminology, and two no-win perennials whether you're adult or child, being cheeky to a police-woman and atropy with the headmaster.

But all is never lost. Just when things look irretrievable, the protagonist's alter ego pops up on screen in a little round inset, an *esprit d'escalier* for once appearing before it's too late, and speaking with the voice of reason: "Do you really know what he means? Go on - ask!" "Are you sure you know

what you're doing?" "Why not suggest scenarios illustrating just what not to do. Characters turn up in all kinds of trouble: losing their temper with officials, who are then unable to explain what benefits they can claim; being bullied and bluffed by the GP who doesn't explain medical terminology, and two no-win perennials whether you're adult or child, being cheeky to a police-woman and atropy with the headmaster."

Elizabeth Mickery and Brian Truman role-play officialdom with just the right blend of rule-worship and concerned inaction, and Norcen Kershaw falls sweetly into ignorant, glibly ordinariness, though for anyone who saw her recently at the Mermaid playing Trafford Tanzi, the female wrestler, her vulnerability will be touched with irony. Often down but never out, Tanzi wrestles her way into control over her life. This face is not the face to be done down by bureaucracy for long.

The mix of presentation styles is a good one, and the programmes succeeded in being both informative and

entertaining. They don't, of course, have all the answers, but they do tell you how to find out, where to go for more information, who to turn to, who to complain to, in all manner of different predicaments.

The Citizens' Advice Bureau is heavily plugged, quite rightly, as a first step, and the book of the series, *That's the Way to Cope with Officialdom and How to Cope with it* by David Browne, is another obvious starting point.

Most of the problems discussed are problems of adult life, so for those about to embark on it the programmes could be useful. Adult life hits suddenly and hard; surviving on a grant or on the dole could be just around the corner; you could buy a faulty radio, find yourself in hospital or get arrested tomorrow. Knowing how the system works before you're caught up in it must be an advantage.

Jessica Savage

## Cultural journey

## VIDEO

*Two-Way Ticket* Six 26-minute programmes VHS or Betamax £45 plus VAT from Yorkshire Television Ltd.

UNICEF Development Kits: No. 13 *The Desert Child* (Pakistan of Mountain); No. 14 *The Mountain Child* (Oscar of Peru); No. 15 *The Rainforest Child* (Pauline of Malaysia); £8.45 each from the UK Committee for UNICEF, 83 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3NB (01-405-5592).

In a very valuable tie-up arrangement, traveller and writer Sarah Hobson has presented her explorations

of children's life in different parts of the world in more than one format. There is a series of six programmes made for Yorkshire Television: three of these have also been turned into UNICEF information packs; and there is also a book available from Macdonalds, with the same title.

The six areas covered differ in culture, climate and terrain. They are the Peruvian mountains; the Malaysian jungle; the Hebrides; Arctic Norway; Bangladesh; and the Mauritanian desert. In each case, a child from the region concerned is brought to the English studios to talk about their life, show us every-day objects, sing or dance.

This may sound hideously embarrassing; but Sarah Hobson's total lack of condescension, her genuine contact and sympathy with the children and their cultures, makes each visit an actual meeting point. And she asks for their reactions to our culture as well.

This interview occupies the second half of each programme. The first half combines economy with ingenuity, and effectiveness in its combination of still and motion pictures and sound recordings from the archive - presenting the image of each place in our culture's eyes as well as its actuality.

Many simple but skilful aids to comprehension are used in the description of the different regions' lifestyle and occupations.

Sarah Hobson is also responsible for the UNICEF kits. The core of each is a set of colour slides drawn

from the Yorkshire Television programmes and accompanied by interviews with the child who lives in the area (only Peru, Mauritania and Malaysia are covered). The rest of each kit consists of half of background notes on the place, the people, and UNICEF's activities there, and half of activity sheets. Especially useful is a section on "Misconceptions", helping children to look at how ideas on other cultures are conditioned and distorted.

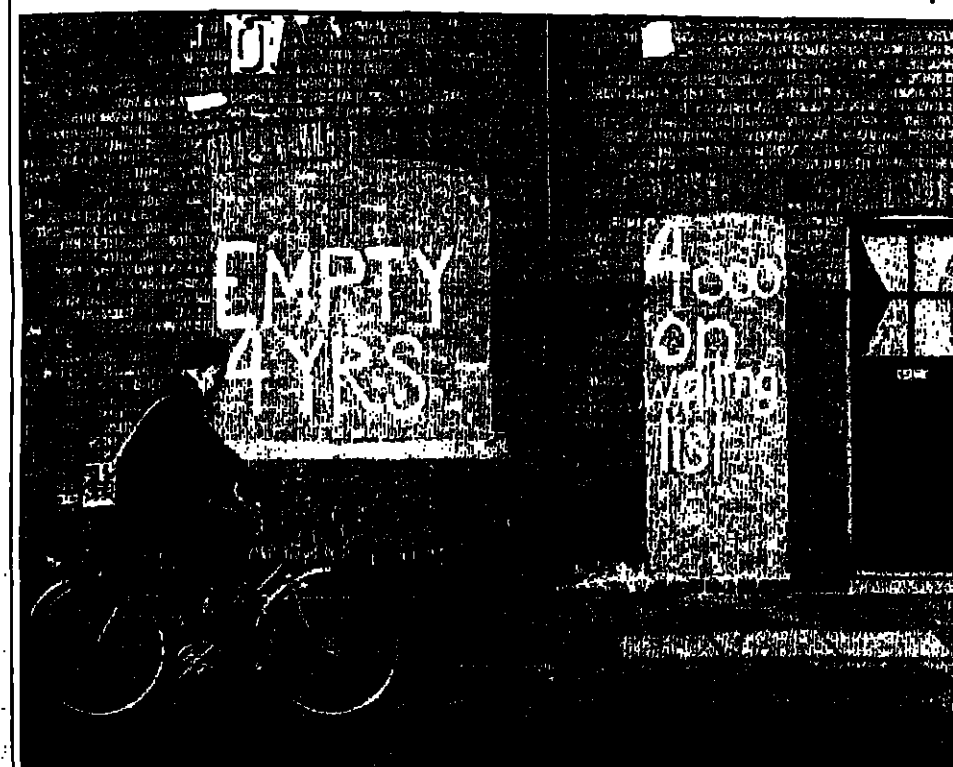
Either the television series or the UNICEF kits can stand completely on their own as a useful and attractive aid to learning about the world. But the combination of the two may be found especially useful - with the kit taking pupils further into the infrastructure of a society.

Nick Thomas

## END PAGE

## What's the point?

Education for life means more than education for work; Gabriel Chanan argues schools should be teaching the community skills people need to improve their lot.



Education has often been the route by which bright individuals escape from depressed environments. Those who cannot escape are assumed to be able to adapt to an unchangeable environment. But community studies in school could lay the basis for the skills required to diagnose and change that environment directly, both by organising amongst one's neighbours and by negotiating with local authorities and other holders of power and resources.

I am not suggesting that these goals can be aimed at by children. But they form an area of adult need and opportunity which should be a reference-point for the aims of schooling, like employment and other recognised areas of lifelong activity.

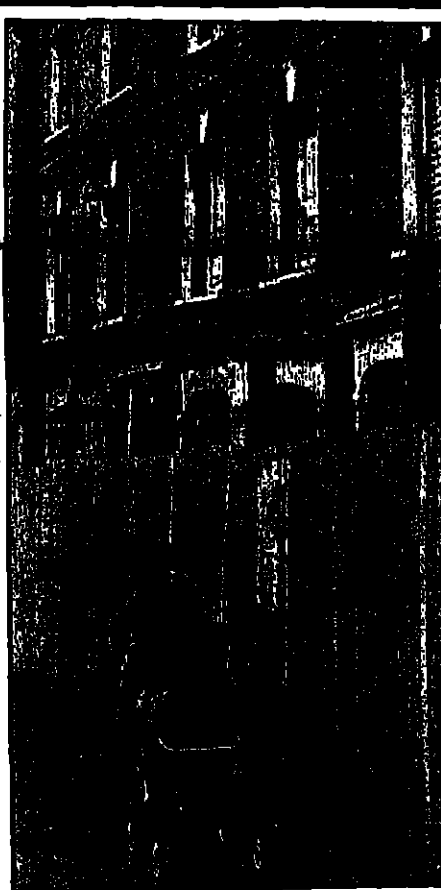
The commanding heights of the practical curriculum have been seized by the MSC. Schools are now obliged to view MSC schemes as an immediate destination for a large proportion of leavers. Success on an MSC scheme therefore becomes the nearest outside-school goal for these pupils, as success in higher education is for others.

But lasting practical goals in education need to be derived from an analysis of the whole of adult life. MSC schemes may be a realistic introduction to conventional industry work, for those who get employment. But it can only temporarily delay the realization, applicable to all though most acute for the unemployed, that the majority of life's problems do not occur in the form of clear-cut demands but in the form of ill-understood needs and ill-seen opportunities.

The new personal effectiveness element in MSC schemes (equivalent to life skills in the Youth Opportunities Programme) goes a little way towards addressing this fact - but only a little. Schools are in a better position, with their wider range of types of knowledge, to confront it fully. In doing so, they could "leapfrog" the MSC curriculum and demonstrate a more penetrating kind of practicality, oriented to the world which young people will face after MSC training.

Community studies, or more accurately, community development studies is not a concept pulled out of the air: it comes from 15 years' experimentation. There is nothing secret about the experiments and yet they are not well known. Four initiatives began in 1968 and 1969: the national Community Development Project (CDP); the Urban Aid programme; the Educational Priority Areas (EPAs); and the Young Volunteer Force Foundation (YVFF).

The CDP's brief was to help people, in 12 disadvantaged districts, to participate more actively in local democracy and so influence the way that local authority services were delivered. The local bases produced a great many reports, and arguably moved government perceptions of inner-city decay away from the supposed fecklessness of low-income groups towards structural explanations like the closure of local industries. Some of the reports became increasingly critical of government, and the project was gradually cut adrift and abandoned by its Home Office sponsors.



The Urban Aid programme now handled by the Department of Environment was originally conceived as mopping up obstinate patches of poverty in an affluent society. It is a flexible resource allocating parcels of money by assessing applications from local authorities who have identified special needs. Urban Aid has become increasingly important as the recession has deepened, though, like all these experiments, it is still very small compared with the size of the problems it is trying to tackle.

The EPA had a marked, though not uncriticised, influence on educational practice, encouraging schools in disadvantaged areas to accommodate more of the real life of their pupils. And YVFF, originally designed to turn the talents of disaffected young people to helping their neighbours, was increasingly drawn into confronting the common problems of the young people and their neighbours: in 1978 this was recognised by the change of name to Community Projects Foundation.

The young adult who cannot get a job does not find himself or herself in a situation of leisure, but in a psychological vacuum. For a woman there may be a strong pressure to take premature refuge in the normality of being a housewife and mother. For a man there may be the difficulty of accepting a female role if his wife or partner gets a job and he doesn't. For either, being unemployed is more likely to be felt as a personal problem, whether of inadequacy or bad luck, than as conferring some kind of new identity in common with others. The ability to take advantage of leisure facilities is likely to be limited by lack of information, public transport or money. Housing conditions and local amenities will vitally affect quality of life. Welfare benefits grants and services may present a jungle

The feeling that nothing can be done about the state of the world, even the local world, is common enough even amongst the employed and the established. How much more impotent and isolated must the young unemployed feel? Yet the experience of community development is that most local situations contain unrealised possibilities for constructive action.

Many of the problems faced by individuals are probably shared by others in the locality and could form the basis of a common-interest group where information can be exchanged, friendships can be built up and joint action can be considered. Problems are less overwhelming when looked at from the point of view of a group pooling its ideas and skills. Even quite small groups usually turn out to have, between them, a surprisingly wide range of knowledge and skills.

Local public groups can be created by quite small numbers of people and obtain far reaching benefits for a neighbourhood. If they gain at least the passive support of a fairly wide section of the local population. Elected councils are supposed to be responsive to ordinary people's needs and wishes, and can eventually be influenced by sustained argument.

Those who cannot earn more can spend less by organising mutual help such as working on each other's houses, bulk buying of food, or sharing information about benefits. There may be dormant wealth in your locality in the form of empty buildings or amenities that are unused for parts of the week or year, which could be made available for social or workshop activities.

Local economies sometimes have gaps which can be filled by new small business activity, which you can get help in starting. Central government has various sums set aside which can be allocated to areas in need if local authorities can meet the necessary criteria, but authorities may not take this action unless pressed to do so.

Concepts like these are just as intellectually demanding as those in academic syllabuses, and it may therefore be difficult to imagine that they could be mastered by pupils of low ability. But our notion of ability has been so narrowed by its association with academic achievement that we may surely hope to find unsuspected abilities drawn out by the practical orientation of these new goals.

Most of the achievements of local groups have never been documented. But there is a gradually increasing literature on the subject. Between 1977 and 1982, for example, community groups involving some 200 adults in Bedworth Heath, Warwickshire, in an ill-provided and initially demoralised neighbourhood of 8,000, achieved:

- a new heating system on a council estate;
- an advice service;
- several community festivals;
- a free community newspaper;
- a new community centre;
- 15 jobs under the Community Programme;
- better dialogue with the local authority;
- confidence in their own power to organise and

The skills that can improve life in this way are valuable alongside those which enable people to improve their lives by earning a wage. But they are not alternatives. If anything, the community skills are more complex. Certainly they involve more intellectual stretching than most paid labour does. Acquiring them would not impede people's ability to get conventional jobs - quite the contrary. No doubt, just like academic goals, community development studies would involve lower-level concepts and activities which need to be mastered at an earlier stage. Some will come down to the same basic skills which teachers have always sought to impart. Others will point to major neglected areas, such as understanding the powers and decision-making processes of local authorities.

A great deal of what we call inability to learn is surely just inability to see the point of learning. Perhaps this reflects teachers' lack of conviction that what they are imparting has a practical use. A clearer view of how communities can fight for their own development would help to change.

Gabriel Chanan is Deputy Director at CPF, 60 Highbury Grove, London, N5 2AG.



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